

THE
Roman Empress.
A
TRAGEDY:

Acted at the ROYAL THEATER,
BY HIS
MAJESTIES SERVANTS.

And written by
WILLIAM FOYNER, Gent.

Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina Mævi; Virg. Ecl. 3.
Atque inopis rerum versus, nugæque canoras. Horat.

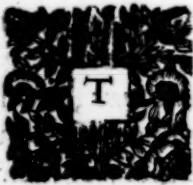
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THE

TO THE
HONORABLE
S^r Charles Sidley.

SIR,

 Hough this Tragedy, in spite of a dead Vacation, and some other impediments, found the applause & approbation of the Theater as oft as it appear'd: yet I esteem it a singular fortune to have had yours in particular: and look upon it like the great advantage, which a rich jewel gives to a ring of gold. Such envious spirits, who thought nothing requisite, but audacity, to become Censors in this Art (which perchance is the subtilest of human invention) and upon this ground condemn'd the common suffrage: when they see it confirm'd by yours, will lose the choicest fruits of their malice. In the government of Provinces under *Nero*, 'tis observ'd, that it was alwayes dangerous to do well; and yet not still safe to do ill. These persons would bring the Stage to the same condition: for as they have sought to condemn this Play for the regular conformity to the rules of art, and reason; so they have not desisted sometimes to decry others for their unna-

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tural


The Epistle Dedicatory.

tural incongruities, when they have been inform'd where they are. Sir I could wish that you, so far plac'd above the reach of envy, would honor the Theater with some productions of this nature : For there is nothing more difficult ; or which requires a more elevated wit, richer fancy, or subtiler judgement : Which rare qualities concur in you in so high a perfection, that there is no free, noble soul which denies you herein the just tribute of respect and preference. In the happy return, and conduct of our great Sovereign, we see restor'd to us the secure felicity of the times of *Augustus* . To which you might add the splendour, by affording us the noble fruits and inventions of your wit. *Messala Corvinus* , and *Pollio* , the Ornaments of that Court, though eminent in War, prefer'd this way to perpetuate the glory of their names : A desire which naturally inflames Heroical breasts ; and should do yours : the commendation of the present times being a Patrimony of too contracted limits for so great a worth : which cannot receive deserv'd fame and reputation, but from the bounty of succeeding ages : which I much wish, and at present, the continuation of a flourishing prosperity. I am,

SIR, *Your most humble and
obliged Servant,*

WILLIAM JOYNER.

The Preface.

AVING consider'd, that of all Tragedies the old Oedipus, in the just estimation of the Antients and Moderns carry'd the Crown : a Story as yet untoucht by any English Pen ; I thought, though defective in my art, I could not be but very fortunate in this my subject. Which has given me leave not only to include what is admirable in this Oedipus; but several great advantages above it for a Tragical Theater. Of which, one is the greatness of this Roman Emperour above so petty a Prince in Greece. Another is, that tis imagin'd, there was never any such person as this Oedipus, and the Story wholly fabulous. Whereas mine is founded in truth and reality. For, though by advise of friends I have disguis'd the names ; yet this Emperour was one of the greatest that ever Rome boasted. He held his Adversary sometime reduc'd to that low condition and posture I describe. And instigated by this malicious calumny of his Empress; put to death his own Son, after the creating of him Cæsar. As it was affirm'd by the glorious Martyr Artemius in the presence of the Emperour Julian Apostate : Who was the near Kinsman of this Florus ; and very inquisitive after the sad end of so brave and illustrious a Person. Yet some Historians make him die accus'd for Treason : and I for both ; with the most forcible reasons I could produce. For intending Valentius for my Protagonist,

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The most perfect subject of Tragical compassion in
the opinion of Aristotle, approv'd by all intelligent
Persons, was strangely to circumvent him; and make
him excusable, I possibly could, that imprudence for
which Zosimus maliciously defames him. Besides this
Character of Oedipus, the true occurrents of this admira-
ble Story afford me two others highly celebrated by all learn-
ed Nations, in the persons of Fulvia, and Elorus, who
much represents the old Hippolytus, unless it be in the
horrid rudeness of his carriage; which I have here chang'd
into a gallant bravery, ending in a dismal Catastrophe;
much more agreeable to the compassion of these Times. The
antient Phœdra is here set off in a real Fulvia; and I am
inform'd, some exceptions are taken at the wickedness I
have in her person: but sure these people want a subject of
discourse and trouble, who would fain concern themselves
in my not concealing the ill qualities of a Pagan woman:
who for the atrocity of these crimes is known in History to
have had a miserable end. This Character has been ever
much extoll'd: if my art has fail'd in the writing of it, it
was highly recompenc'd in the scenical presentation; for it
was incomparably acted. I have for the greater variety of the
Stage divided this Character, conferring some share of it on
Aurelia, which, though a great, various, and difficult
part, was excellently performed. In the person of Honori-
us, I have nothing of antiquity to plead for me, the Cha-
racter being never thought of by any man but by self: nei-
ther had I honour'd him with such noble company, but by
the advice of some friends; who perswaded me, that his
horrid opinions, by reason of the novelty, and the setting off
a false

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a false Pagan Gallantry, would excellently suit with this Tragical Subject. At which no just exceptions can be taken, for none sure come to Playes to learn true history, or religion; and to make profane persons speake profanely, is practis'd in the Tragedies of Petavius; whom I my self knew as eminent for his piety, as learning.

If the language please not, I am sorry: the fault proceeds from no want of respect to the Audience. For I wrote the quantity of three or four Playes upon this noble Subject; of which I conceive this the best extract. Such who expect to have their ears tickled with the gingling Antitheses of Love and Honor, and such like petty wares, will find themselves deceiv'd. For the chief intent of Tragedy being to raise Terror and Compassion; I thought a more masculine and vigorous eloquence and graces more natural, and less affected, were requisite to inspire such impressions. For satisfaction of the English Stage, which delights in variety, I have sought to entertain the Audience with the divertisement of new accidents; not only from Act to Act, but Scene to Scene; where the Contests are lively, the Passions violent, the Designes extreme, and the Deliberations horrid. My endeavour has been to conform this piece to the best rules of Art in all the parts: Though my Opposers have presum'd to condemn it cleer throughout: but especially in the fifth Act, which they have concluded senseless, and void of all art and reason; With which (as the head of man is with intellectual faculties) it should be chiefly enricht. And so the Reader shall perceiue it, if he please rather to direct himself by the rules of solid Science; then the dreams of these persons. For here he finds himself arriv'd at the end of
strange.

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strangely astonishing disasters; yet confin'd within the limits of Probability; without having the least reason to demand how he has been conducted, or by what means they have been wrought. Though in the passage (as I may say) they have been wholly surprising, and left him every where at a loss. This rule I have observ'd throughout the Play, to please the judicious, who still watch and expect things unexpected: And I believe will scarce find here one anticipated action, or event. For the Dream of Valentius, though it seems to give a manifest overture of the consequence, yet the obscurity is so dark, that it deceives not only Him, but the very Audience; the fatal thunderbolt falling, unseen and unheard in the midst of them. And here occurs in the Person of Valentius, what Aristotle admires in Oedipus, confessing human wit can invent in this kind nothing beyond it. For he incurs those very misfortunes, which with all imaginable care he shun'd; condemning his Son without knowing him; and after death knowing him without all benefit: which makes him the best, and greatest of all Tragical Subjects. The narration I have made cleer, pathetique, and short; including a story curious, and therefore not tedious: To shun which fault I have also interrupted it with the doleful exclamation of Valentius in the Agnition of his Error: Which to judicious ears appears the most melodious part in Tragical composition. In the escape of Fulvia I have follow'd the example of Medea, which by the subtle and judicious Castelvetro is only censur'd for the want of preparatives: the foregoing parts having nothing contributed to this strange action. Which is here contrary; and the conveyance more rational. Which my opposers should have re-
markt.

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mark. And how the great Catastrophes in this Play proceed from no external helps, or new faces unseen before; but from the interweaving of the intrinsecal parts of the Subject; And how I have not defil'd the Majestique Grace of a Tragique Theater with the company of any vile Plebeian Persons, though the Plot has been so variously intricated. They should lastly have taken notice, that here is nothing Episodical; which I have not made essential in the construction of the Story; from whence arises the graceful Union: An observation to be wisht more in fashion. For it is this Union, which like Harmony in Musique, gives the last perfection and beauty to all Subjects moral, as well as, natural.

The

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

V *Alentius*, Roman Emperour. } Major *Mobun*.
Florus, whose other name is *Vespasius*, }
 General of *Valentius*; proving at last } Mr. *Kynaston*.
 to be his Son. }
Honorius, Friend of *Florus*: *Epicurean* in his } Mr. *Bell*.
 opinions. }
Statilius, A Military Councillor, and Favo- } Mr. *Lyddel*.
 rite of *Valentius*. }
Macrinus, A great Person, vulgarly passing } Mr. *Beefston*.
 for the Father of *Florus*. }
Servilius, } Great Courtiers, and Commanders } Mr. *Harris*.
Carbo, } of Legions. } Mr. *Littlewood*.
Fulvia, Roman Empress, in love with } The young Mrs.
Florus. } *Marshall*.
Antonia, Lady of Honor to *Fulvia*, and Wife } Mrs. *Kneap*.
 to *Servilius*. }

Hostilius, Tyrant of *Rome*. } Mr. *Watson*.
Arsenius, General of *Hostilius*, and thinking } Mr. *Cartwright*.
 himself Father of *Florus*. }
Anrelia, Daughter of *Hostilius*, of singular } Mrs. *Bontell*.
 beauty, belov'd of *Florus*. }
Sophonia, Her Governess; who proves to be }
Palladia, first Wife of *Valentius*, supposed } Mrs. *Cory*.
 long before dead. }

Courts, Men, Women, Officers, Attendants, &c.

The *SCENE* of this Drama or Action is about the Banks of *Tiber*: where *Hostilius* and his Party are suppos'd to be in *Rome*, or on the *Roman* side of the River: And *Valentius* with his Party encamp't on the other side in the nature of Be-siegers.

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THE Roman Empress.

A C T. I.

Hostilius, Courtier, and Court-Attendants.

The SCENE expos'd of a Battle newly fought.

Court. **T**He Enemy, Sir, is at last retreated
Almost with equal loss, after a cruel
And bloody fight, excepting that young
Lucius,
Prince of the Roman Youth, and your
brave Son,

As yet appears not : your Camp-master below
Attends to give you an exact relation.

Host. I come : in the mean space see that
my Daughter
Attend me here : *Co.* I shall --- Madam I was
Just coming to inform your Princely Highness,
How his Imperial Majesty intends
To find you in this place. *An.* Depart. He shall

Exeunt.
Enter Aurelia,
Sophonia.

Sophonia. Aurelia weeping.

So. Madam, I should esteem the tears you shed
At a great value, did they ease those griefs
They thus lament : but they rather increase them :
Clear those bright lights then from those misty clouds.

The Roman Empress.

Au. ————— My dear *Sophonia*,
 Whose milk first gave me bloud, whose bosom, life ;
 Add this to those thy other benefits,
 To let me thus consume my self in tears
 Which are so just : thou seest
 My Fathers power, which lately had no other
 Bounds, than the boundless Ocean, and the Heavens
 Contracted to the Walls of *Rome*, confin'd
 Here to the Banks of *Tiber* ; where we suffer
 Defeats upon defeats, no funerals see
 Of Parents, Friends, Allies ; which make not up
 Their horrid train with funerals of others.
 I fear the issue of this cruel fight,
 Wherein my Brother was engag'd. New horror,
 Besides from ill presages of my mind
 Torments my fancy.

Soph. These thoughts and fears unworthy are to enter
 The breast of my *Aurelia*, but are inmates
 Fit to be entertain'd by such are born
 To the distaff and obedience : you the Daughter
 And Niece of Emperors, markt with the stamp
 Of Majesty Imperial, and of Beauty,
 Are destin'd, when that *Rome* shall choose her Head,
 To be Commandress of that great Commander,
 Or rather by the honor of your bed
 To shew who's proper to be *Rome's* great Head.
 Compose your self, your tears and grief assuage
 By timely marriage, and stop this civil rage.

Au. From funeral, to those of nuptial rites,
 The passage will seem strange : the heavens change not
 So suddenly, but 'twixt the day and night
 They interpose the mornings dusky light.

Soph. The morning's gay and pleasant, dissipates
 Nights horror ; so let mirth begin in you
 A day of jollity, which may not know
 What setting is.

Au. Which to me cannot happen ; thou hast known
 My heart, *Sophonia*, and what a cruel part

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Love there has acted ; for I told thee how
When I last passed to the Enemies Camp
In my disguise (as I must now again)
I fell in love with *Florus* their brave Gen'ral,
And so became a captive of the greatest
Oppressor of our Cause, and Family.

Soph. Madam, *Arsenius* has inform'd you how
He's more surpriz'd with you ; so that two flames
Love never better kindled, to extinguish
This mortal hatred of your Families.

An. True, if the cruel nature of my Father,
Who thirsts after his blood, would not oppose us.
But here he comes ; and as my fears foretel me,
To reprehend me on this very subject.

To them Hostilius and Macrinus.

Hof. Macrinus, when the Romans surfeited
With Roman blood, think fit to stop the torrent,
You like a generous adversary will
Advance the publick good : *Mac.* 'Tis my first wish
Thus to express my gratitude to you.

Hof. Farewel, and, where the laws of arms permit you,
Be civil to my party. Now *Sophonia*, *Exit Macr.*
Your obligations to *Macrinus* are
Cancell'd by this his liberty, I give him ;
Which though you do not, I count forfeited.

Sop. I must eternally record this favour.

Hof. Aurelia, 'twas you, and your intreaty *Exit Soph.*
I sought to gratifie herein : I hope
When I grant your request, that you will mine,
Which is at present, to cast off thoughts of love,
Especially of *Florus* ; an Usurper,
As in the State, so in thy breast now enterd,
Where love must have no harbor : I shall find
Passions more noble to possess thy mind.

An. Sir, if external beauty joyn'd with virtue
Force love in womans heart, it is no wonder

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Florus

Flora finds entrance here : Sir, let these tears
 Soften that breast, which the age, war, and custom
 Seem to have armed so against compassion.

————— When you reflect
 On loves predominancy over all things,
 Can you imagin that the soft and tender
 Breast of a young and inexperience'd Virgin
 Can resist him, who under the white snow
 Of reverend gray-heads, kindles his fires,
 and with his flames, extinguishes the light
 Of the maturest judgements.

Hof. ————— Love exercises
 His power only where he finds consent.

An. ——— No April tree when her green season's past
 Shoots not forth into blossoms ; nor no Virgin,
 Her Spring time come, feels not the heats of love.

However O my erring soul, and thou
 My captiv'd heart, and you my thus misplac'd
 Affections bear me witness, if I us'd not
 (To comply with my Father) all my forces
 To free my mind from these tyrannick passions :
 But O alas ! the more I fought to break
 These fetters, I in them was more intangled.
 This love which in my breast insensibly
 It self insinuating, there grew up
 Without advise of reason, can't be now
 By reason either govern'd, or extinguish'd.

Hof. ————— Audacious creature, were I not (what thou
 Seems't to deny here) an indulgent Father,
 Thou from these hands at present shouldst receive
 Chastisement proper to thy insolence,
 Which now falls on thee mitigated onely
 Into admonishment ; thy error is
 Th' error of love, which is excusable
 In younger age, confined within limits
 Excusable ; but when a royal Princess
 Hurri'd from love to madness by her passion
 Disdains the curbs of reason, and of honor,

*shows her
 his sword.*

And

The Roman Empress.

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And yields her self up to my greatest foe,
This is a crime severely to be punish'd;
and should be, were I not assur'd of thy
Future amendment : but in the mean time
Wipe off thy tears, for *Florus* here with this. *Gives her a bloody handkerchief.*

An. What ominous gift is this? *Hof.* It is a token *She startles.*
Dipt in thy Brother *Lucius* blood, with which
The hands of *Florus*, as yet hot, and distilling,
Must thee embrace. *An.* Death shall embrace me first
In her cold arms. What mutiny is here?

One of my chiefest vital parts has me
Depriv'd of th' other. Oh, my Brother slain!
And by the hands of *Florus*, just when he
Has signifi'd his flames reciprocal,
And great as mine. O my accursed fate!

Why, we were twins, bedfellows in the womb,
Companions e're born, together united
Before with life inspired : in his death

I've lost my better part, and can't survive
With what is left me. *Hof.* *Aurelia*, nay *Aurelia*,

Recall thy self, thy Father is yet living
Thy loving Father, who to thee shall be
A Brother, Mother, all things; reassume

She falls into a swoon.

He strives to recover her.

Thy life and courage. *An.* I do, and find my self *She seems to come to her self.*
In this short transe so chang'd, that now I'm sorry
I have no penitential moisture left

To expiate those tears, against my duty,
Cast away on the love of *Florus* : but
You'll pardon this defect; desire of my
Revenge so agitates my heart, and raiseth
Such violent motions in my troubled fancy
Transporting all my thoughts, and faculties
To her tyrannique will; like some vast flame,
Which all occurring obstacles consuming,
Transformeth them at last into her self.

Rage, choller, fury, offspring of hell increase
And multiply here in this breast, which freely
I open to you, casting out all thoughts

OF

The Roman Empress.

Of virgin softness, or remorse; hereafter
 These fountains of my eyes be ever dry;
 My hands, and tongue audacious to commit
 Mischiefs to terrifie mankind; my looks
 Dissembling, treacherous, and fatal be
 To those they please; the powers of my soul
 Let my rage rule, and nothing it controul.

Hof. Aurelia, now thou shew'st, thou dost inherit,
 As well as Mothers beauty, Fathers spirit.
 Magnanimous revenge, not love's a guest
 Fit to be harbor'd in a royal breast.

Exeunt.

Sophonia. Macrinus.

Soph. O dear *Macrinus*, hasten thy departure,
Hostilius must not know thy longer stay,
 He thinks he gives, what he can take away,
 Thy liberty, which I have so endanger'd.

Mac. I would expose my life, much more what you
 Call liberty, to serve your Majesty.

Soph. That word does but revive
 The memory of my unhappy fate,
 Which I would fain forget. I prethee weep not.

Macr. weeps.

Mac. Madam, I must, though I rejoyce to see
 Your virtue triumph o're your misery.

Soph. Thou seest *Valentius* finds his satisfaction
 In my supposed death. *Mac.* The Gods we see
 Intend your happiness, since sure by their
 Instinct he destines *Florus* for the Throne.

Soph. Macrinus, thou wouldst fain revive my false
 And treacherous hopes; but oh, I fear the heavens,
 Which see mee in my miseries grow old,
 Will in them let me die: but pray lets see
 The way th' hast found (excuse my vanity)
 To save my reputation when I dye.

Mac. Here's the Inscription which I have made of you.

The

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The most unfortunate of women, the suppos'd Sophonia, was the true Palladia, Empress, and Wife of Valentius, condemn'd by him upon a false suspicion, but sav'd by Macrinus conscious of her innocence and virtue, in testimony whereof he hath left these characters engraved with his own hands.

This I have cut in several plates of brass,
Which fixt in walls, and only incrust'd over
With a slight plaister, in short-time decaying,
Will clear your story to the abused world.

Soph. Honest *Macrinus*, how much I fear
I never shall this zeal of thine repay :
Once more farewell, make speedy hast away.

Exeunt.

Florus. Servilius. Carbo.

Carb. ———— Though Courts have ever been
The chiefest Theaters where love delights
To represent his cruel, serious follies :
Yet Camps are not exempted. *Serv.* Yes, Sir, but
The wonder is to see our noble Gen'ral
Surpriz'd thus with the picture of a Lady.

Car. Why were you so ? *Flo.* Yes, when the Roman Eagles
Victoriously under my conduct flew
Through *Italy*, reducing the Enemies power
To the Precincts of *Rome* ; in the surprisal
Of *Sarnium*, I saw the picture of a Lady,
Drawn by the pencil of the famous *Sanga*,
Whose shape the very Goddesses would take,
Were they to make love here on earth again :
Ah how this object in the very moment
Depriv'd me of my liberty, so that
My entrance there was servile, not triumphal.

Car. To see arise in a great General
Confusion from a Picture, from a shadow,
Is very strange. *Serv.* I thought
A painted fire might deceive the sight

But

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But never raise a heat, or kindle flames.

Flor. I grant this; did not fame
Paint out th' original substance of this shadow
Above what fancy comprehends; *Eumolpus*
Has on this subject made a Song, wherein
He's toucht the proper string of my affection,
With commendation of his friend the Painter.
Boy, lets see it, go now, and sing it.

S O N G.

*That divine form which thus deludes thy sense,
And holds thee gazing in a strange suspence,
The creature only is of Sanga's art;
Yet from these eyes love does his fires dart.
To them a lively speech his fav'ring hand
(Which to the tongue he never would impart)
Has giv'n like Sirens to betray thy heart.
Ah slye then! 'tis too late; thou hast thy wound,
And there dost panting lye upon the ground.*

My strange misfortune is, that I,
Or rather my ill fate, have fixt my love
Upon an Enemy of *Valentius*;
So that if I pursue it, I shall lose
My Princes favour; and if not, I lose
My soul, my self.

Car. Why he is sick of my disease, I love.
An Enemy of *Valentius*; to Thee
Aurelia I gave my faith before.
Thy Father was declar'd his enemy.

ser. I must condem this love. *Car.* 'Tis then with high
injustice.

ser. ——— He's guilty who hates not
His Princes Enemies; can you think him
Then innocent, who thus adores them.

Flor. ——— Have patience only, and
Consider if th' admirer of this object

rather

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Rather deserves reproach, pity, or envy *shows a picture to them.*
Car. ———— Whats this I see! *aside startling.*

I have defended here my Rival; this
 Is my *Aurelia's* picture, which I left her
 A pledge of my eternal love at parting.

Ser. This image so confounds my reason, that
 Th' accused may justly absolve himself *aside surpriz'd.*
 By virtue of his Judges crime; I must
 Think of my duty to my Wife and Prince.

Flor. ———— I perceive strange emotion
 In them, but would not from their weakness seek
 Protection for my failings. Why thus chang'd?
 Come in, and recollect your selves, I'll see
 If you are sick of my infirmity. *Exeunt.*

Arsenius. Honorius.

*Arf. disguis'd in habit
 of a common souldier.*

Arf. ———— Behold us here arriv'd
 At the Tents of *Valentius*; that I,
 The General of *Hostilius*, disguis'd
 In this vile habit of a common Souldier,
 Expose my self to him my Enemy,
 Are strange effects of love: that liberty
 ———— Which I give thee,
 Thou in requital seems't to take from me.

Hon. Sir, that you have restor'd me to my self
 And liberty, I must confess, but not
 That I thus seek to recompence your favour;
 Express your meaning: these words offend my honor.

Arf. You have oft told me that
 Your General *Florus* was your greatest friend;
 On which belief I let you know he was
 My only Son; and how capricious fortune
 Had separated those minds, and affections
 Which nature joyn'd. *Hon.* 'Tis true, and I acquainted
 You with his love of your Princess *Aurelia*;
 Well knowing the advantages you would
 Take to seduce him from his loyalty,

C

With

The Roman Empress.

With so fair a temptation ; but know
 To this I then consented, fearing, that
 To take from noble vertue the occasion
 Of victory, was to envy her triumphing.

Arf. I hope his love of her will now extort
 That which the duty of a Father could not,
 That's his obedience ; since love ever finds
 His Empire greatest in the greatest minds :

—though hitherto
 The vain and empty title of being loyal
 Prevail'd more with him then the entreaties of
 A most indulgent and a tender father.

Hon. Sir, you are too indulgent, who would thus
 Permit, nay more perswade him to become
 A Traitor to his Prince, the common Father
 Of us, and of his Country ; and in whose
 Obedience, though with loss of life, and fortune,
 He's happy in performing thus his duty.

Arf. Of all wild beasts, which entrance find in Courts,
 Malicious detractors are the worst :
 Of all domestical, these flatterers,
 Which into Princes ears gently distill
 The poison of these maxims, as if human
 Nature could thus comply with servitude,
 Not foaming at the Curb ; Sir, like sea waves,
 Impetuously forc'd by several winds,
 We are by the tempestuous torrents hurri'd
 Of rage, ambition, choller, and revenge :
 Of which the latter justly has provokt
 My indignation against *Valentius*.

Hon. Nothing can justify these practises
 Against your Prince.

Arf. But to the subject, to return from which
 We deviate now ; I have of late obtain'd

Aurelia by the consent of her Father
 In marriage for my Son, to whom I lately
 Address a letter signifying the same,
 Intending you the happy bearer of

Shows him a letter.

This

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This grateful news, of which another Copy
I to *Aurelia* sent, to shew my pen
As forward as my sword in the procuring
Hers, and her Fathers interest; but since
Considering in desperate diseases,
That extreme remedies are best, I've chang'd
My thoughts, perswaded that a Fathers presence
Will be more prevalent

Then the mute eloquence of Paper; so
Behold me here arrived, to procure
An end to my calamities; my Sons
Greatest felicity; the ruine of
The persecutor of my life, *Valentius*.

Hon. Give o're this rash discourse; here thou shouldst die
The sacrifice of my just indignation, *draws at him.*
Wer't not to envy thy brave Sons secure
Triumphing over thy vain stratagems.
Dost hope through my protection to put
Thy treacherous practice into execution
Against my Prince? the sound of this discourse
More odious is to me then the noise
Of chains or fetters, which I'll rather suffer.
These abject thoughts proportionate, and proper
Are to thy doating age; attribute to
Thy fortune of having so brave a Son *puts up his sword.*
The life, thou receiv'st from these generous hands.

Ar. Is it a generous part thus to reward
My benefit with this ingratitude?

Hon. A benefit conferred in the sense
Of interest, merits no recompence.

Ar. My forward love mistaken was to try
To gain affection from an Enemy.

Hon. Thy hopes are vain, it was thy error here
With curtesie to 'abuse a Gentleman.

Ar. A Gentleman, who such resentment shows
The man, to whom his liberty he owes?

Hon. Can he be author of my liberty,
Who would engage me in this treacherie?

The Roman Empress.

Ar. Sir, is it treacherously, or nobly done,
To reconcile a Father to a Son ?

Hon. A Father, he who seeks to rob a Son
Of his true honor, and reputation ?

Ar. Honor to spend his youth, and time, and die
In service of his Fathers Enemy ?

Hon. His respect to his Father must give way
To that of his true Prince, who all must sway.

Ar. Mans first, and greatest duty from the tie
Of nature comes, not human policy.

Hon. Nature must yield to reason, which thinks fit,
Privat to publick int'rest should submit.

Ar. Go to thy Son *Arsenius*, and try,
If he be cruel like thy Enemy.

Hon. Go to thy Son *Arsenius* ; there's his Tent :
A Fathers ignominy there lament ; *points to the Tent*
And a Sons glory, as thy punishment. *of the Camp.*

A C T. II.

Fulvia, Antonia. Attendants.

Ful. **A**Ll but *Antonia* leave the place.
Excessive griefs, *Antonia*, receive
No mitigation from advice of friends :
And such are mine ; so that if I implore
Assistance, I exasperate them more.

Ant. Madam, what causes this strange alteration ?
So many nights your eyes have seen no sleep,
Which chang'd of late, have lost their usual lustre.
Your looks and speech are not accompany'd
With their accusom'd graces ; as some sick
Persons, in cold languishing all the night,
With feavors burning at th' approach of light ;

Just

The Roman Empress.

13

Just so your Majesty the Sun offends
When he his course begins, or when he ends.
Th' arrival of the night gives you no ease;
That of the day your torments does increase.
To me your servant why d'you thus affect
To hide the cause, who tell you the effect?

Ful. What shall I do? confessions of our crimes
In Princes are worse crimes than they themselves;
And which, if I strive longer to conceal,
This forced silence will at last reveal:

aside.

————— Let then my will,
Which in an Empress should be sole Commander,
The voluntary first eruption make.

Antonia, thou shalt now know my disease,
But let compassion mollify thy heart
Conformable to the grief, which I suffer.
Who the distressed relieve, must first resent,
And feel the torment of the Patient.

Florus, that name so grateful to *Antonia*,
But more to me.

Florus, I say to thee, so acceptable.

Ant. ————— Madam, 'tis true, 'twas he
Who first to my *Servilius* me united.

Ful. ————— And me has disunited from my self,
My Prince, the world, and all things but himself.

Florus more fair, more beautiful than ~~is~~
Morning or midnight star, more lovely than
The pleasant Sun himself, when he shines through
The golden Fleece of the celestial Ram.

————— O how I am,
With love transported. *Ant.* True;
But 'tis, I hope, of your *Valentius*.

Ful. No; 'tis not: yes, it is; I mean of him:
Not what he is, but what he was; in *Florus*
Me thinks I see *Valentius* reviv'd,
And my old flames: Love has
Retrac'd the same imaginations in
My fancy, which kindled my first desires.

Nature

The Roman Empress.

Nature gave the same features to their faces,
 And to their minds and bodies the same graces.
 Such sprightliness was in *Valentius* looks,
 When first he courted me :

Such was his comely gesture, when on horseback
 The stately courser proud was of his burden.
 Thus smil'd he, thus he frown'd, and in his anger
 Became more lovely from the change of passions.
 Marvel not then, that so great a Commander
 So soon has conquer'd, and inflam'd the breast,
 Alas ! of a poor Lady.

Ant. These heats should be suppress'd in their beginning.

Ful. And so they might ; did they like other fires
 Grow by succession ; but they masterless
 Like lightning, found expansion in an instant
 Through all my veins, inflaming all my spirits.

Ant. Cast off these vain surmises, and be sure
 the thought you may be cur'd, is half the cure.
 Let not your Majesty herein persevere,
 We safely sin sometimes, securely never.
 Strangle these vile thoughts in their infancy.

Ful. This I have oft endeavour'd, but in vain

————— So whilst that I
 Am thus consum'd by an internal fire,
 Scarce daring to let it evaporate
 In words, in sighs, in tears like other lovers ;
 The heat increasing, multiplies within
 My breast, and will, I fear, at last for want
 Of vent destroy me.

Ant. Madam, these thoughts should have no vent, but find
 At once their birth, and burial in your mind.

Ful. My vital heat, and this more vital of
 My love, are substances inseparable ;
 Nay, if the nature of my soul shall not prove
 Mortal, I fear that will not of my love :
 So that to save my honor if I die,
 I am not sure to end my miserie.
 Wilt thou not then afford me thy compassion ?

Ant.

Ant. To her who voluntary casts her self
In miserie, what pity can be due?

Ful. O 'tis against my will; love like a Tyrant has
Reduc't my soul, and all her faculties
In vassalage: Virtue lets fall her arms,
As weak, and useles, 'against such pow'rful charms.

Ant. Think on the violation of your faith.

Ful. I have, and find, that constancy is only
A force imaginary in us women:

I find it by my self. *Ant.* But not by others.

Ful. Canst see me perish, and afford no succour?

Ant. Want of assistance in this kind preserves you.
My succor in this case would make you perish.

Ful. Thy Empress submissively intreats,
And wilt thou not obey? *Ant.* learn to command,
And first your self, and then I shall obey.
I am your servant, not slave of your vice.

Ful. Canst thou a Lover be, and yet so cruel?

Ant. My love I keep confin'd within due limits.

Ful. Contrivers of crimes secretly committed
In Courts, securely still advance themselves,
Without the loss of fame, or reputation.

Ant. We doubly erre; if erring we procure
Th' opinion, that we have conserv'd our honor.

Ful. ————— If we approve in Princes
Actions unjust for private int'rest, why not
Those more excusable for private pleasure?
A hidden fault was never entire crime.

Ant. That which is voluntary, is entire.

Ful. But not in Princes, who being publick persons,
Their vices, if not publick, are not vices;
Nor private virtues esteem'd Princely virtues.
'Tis cruelty not to assist th' afflicted.

Ant. Not when contrivers of their own misfortunes.

Ful. O thou art obstinat. *Ant.* 'Tis constancy.

Ful. 'Tis cruelty. *Ant.* 'Tis generosity.

Ful. Ingratitude in the most high degree.

Ant. Greatest beneficence. *Ful.* Thy Princes hater.

Ant.

The Roman Empress.

Ant. A lover of her honor, and my own.

Ful. No more *Antonia* : shall I live, or die ?

Ant. Then loss of honor, death's less miserie.

Ful. What shall I do ? my reason having lost,
Whiles fury guides me, I rove strangely tost,
I know not where, but certainly astray,
Where honor suffers mad love to lead the way.

Exeunt.

Arsenius. Honorius. Flavius putting up his sword.

Flo. No, no ; I can't believe it ; 'tis almost
Impossible, that he should be my Father,
Who seeks thus to deprive me of my honor,
In forfeiting my duty to my Prince.

————— Acknowledge in pure gift
Thy life from my unlucky ignorance
Of him, who is my Father.

Hon. Brave *Flavius*, this new field maintain,
Which virtue has laid open with intention
To signalize thy valor in all kinds.
Nature her self thou here subduest, not works
Of human art or hand ; and which is most,
None in this conquest, but thy self can boast.

Ar. My Son. *Fl.* My Enemy. *Ar.* My only Son.

Flor. My greatest Enemy. *Ar.* Thou know'st I seek
Thy happiness, and canst thou injure me ?

Flo. Is this an injury, to defend my self
From th'undermining practice of a Traytor ?

Ar. Canst thou submit to serve a Prince, who is
An enemy to him, who gave thee being.

Flo. Suppose you did, will you on this account
Rob me of my well-being, fame, and honor ?

Ar. Disguis'd here in these abject weeds, for thee
My grandour, and my dignity, and life
To hazard I expose.

Flo. Return ; thou hast free leave, and reassume
Thy Generalship under *Hosilius* :
It is my glory in the head of armies

To

To meet me as my adversary ; but
My shame, disgrace, and ignominy to
Respect thee with the reverence of a Father.

Ar. Cruel Barbarian, if thou dispisest
Thy Father, from whom thou enjoy'st this light ;
At least make some account of him, who seeks
To put thee in possession of that
Thou lov'st above this light, thy fair *Anrelia*.

Flo. When my affection to *Anrelia*
Shall be offensive to *Valentius*,
He cast it off.

Ar. Art thou resolv'd to refuse me all pity?

Flo. I shall observe my duty to my Prince.

Ar. Which should give place to thy paternal duty,
And is ingrafted in all breasts but thine ;

————— Known long before,
Private ambition, popular faction
Had laid the ruines, or the foundations
Of Principalities, or Commonwealths,
Whence these names sprang of loyalty, and honor.
The cruel Thracian, barbarous Indian
Acknowledging no other law, know this :
So does th' inhospitable Scythian,
Who others blood devouring, with his own
His aged fainting *Sire* will revive.

Flo. ————— My cruel fortune !
When thy looks fairest are, how thou confound'st me ?
Here filial obligation, which nature
Imprints not only in mens hearts, but beasts,
Challenges my obedience to a Father ;
Who not content to give me life, seeks here
With hazard of his own, to make mine happy.
On th' other side my Prince, who has prevented
My age, my merit, and my expectation,
With heaping on me honors upon honors,
Exacts more from me then my gratitude
Equaliz'd to my wishes could repay.
O how thus strangely circumvented I

small

D

Far

Far greater torment find to live then die!

Hon. Florus, why thus perplex'd? what in a dream?

Dispel these cloudy mists, follow the way,

Where honor lights thee with her golden ray.

Flo. Honorius, thou hast turn'd the balance, which
My trembling heart durst neither way incline.

Ar. Unfortunate Arsenius! what new hopes

Canst thou retain, when they ingrateful are,

Which have such benefits receiv'd from thee;

The one is life, the other liberty.

Hon. To oblige the innocent, to make him guilty,

Is not a benefit, but treachery.

Ar. Ah *Florus*, some respect to these gray hairs,

My Son, some duty's due to me, thy Father.

Let these my tears mollify that hard heart,

Which so inflexible seems to my prayers.

Flo. ——— Old man give over;

Thy words, and time are lost in this pursuit.

Ar. ——— Rash and inhuman creature,

If thou despisest the entreaties of a Father:

——— He make thee ~~lose~~ the courage,

And stratagems of an old General

Grown white under the helmet, and the rage

Of an incensed Enemy: *Valentinus*

Shall know *Aurelia's* thy intended Spouse;

Hostilius thy private Friend: so shall

This artifice at once deprive thee of

Thy honor, and of that unworthy being,

Which I unworthily have given thee.

Flo. O nature, O my honor, cruel Tyrants

Of my divided soul, how you distract me!

In what inextricable labyrinth

Has my ill fortune cast me? if I conquer;

Or yield subdu'd in this unhappy conflict

Of my contesting passions, and affections,

I'm sure to lose my life, or reputation;

Or rather both, which my sad thoughts presage.

Hon. Fear nothing; be not thus dejected, whilst

Here's

The Roman Empress.

19

Here's an *Honorius* to give so ample
A testimony of your innocence.

Flo. Malicious dotard, do thy worst, my clear
Sincerity of mind, and actions shall
Prove, thou a Traytor canst not be my Father.

Ar. Arsenius, thou spend'st thy time, thy words,
And labor here in vain : come then prepare
For thy revenge.

The world shall know what I thought to conceal.

Flo. ————— *Arsenius* hold :

Ah stay, and lets compose this cruel strife ;
You pretend only to have giv'n me life,
Which I'll return t' you : opening thus my breast,
The passage will make entrance for my rest ;
The blood will be the balsom of my honor,
And pay your debt, and save my reputation,

Ar. Arsenius, O thy unhappy fortune !
Which made thee Father, Souldier, or Commander ?
Live cruel Parricide, live, and prolong
Thy odious life ; I'll find some way to death,
And my repose : my self I cannot shew
A cruel Father, or soft-natur'd Foe.

Exit.

Hon. Florus, why thus cast down ? 'tis strange to see
A man dejected after victory.
Here nothing was requir'd but a spectator
Of this most glorious passage of thy life,
Which the propitious aspect of the heavens
Has granted thee in an *Honorius*.

Florus farewell ; congratulate thy happy
Fortune to have preserv'd a Friend, who seeks
The preservation of thy honor ; which
Thy Father, thou here lovest, sought to ruine.

Exit.

Flo. There is no reason nature should unite
By an usurp'd authority those minds,
Virtue upon just grounds has separated.
But see th' Empress comes : I'm sorry she
Should find me in this conflict of my passions.

The Roman Empress.

Fulvia. Florus.

Ful. Ladies retire within ; I will be private.
 See here in finding *Florus* alone, a happy
 Occasion is presented by my fortune
 For the discovery of my passion (which
 As womens wits are best when they have least
 Time to consider) I have found already.
 I'll tell him that I hear his love aspires
 To the possession of a Royal Lady,
 Who meets his flames with mutual fire, commending
 Herein his choice; so by this artifice
 He shall perceive my love in a surprize.
Florus, what is th' occasion of this sadness,
 When th'Emperour so much applauds your conduct?

aside.

Flo. Madam, to see the enemy provide
 Against us a more vigorous assault.

Ful. 'Tis but a new occasion for your triumph.
 I know the real cause of this disturbance.

O *Florus* you aspire to great matters.

Flo. *Servilius* or my Father has betray'd me.

aside.

Ful. Nay I commend your course, 'twas virtue which
 Distinguish'd, and made Princes first; besides
 Love's a great leveller like death, and where
 He finds not an equality, will make it.

Flo. ————— I shall be of the Court
 Now, and the Camp the laughing-stock and sport.

aside.

Ful. If you desir'd such secrecie, you should not
 Make one the object of your love, so near
 In blood to me allied.

Flo. *Aurelia* is her Niece; 'tis very true:
 If I persist, this silence will convince me.

aside.

Let not your sacred Majesty be thus
 Abus'd by false reports; my Princes favor
 And yours (as ever happens in great Courts)
 Have rais'd me private enemies, which seek
 My ruin from these false suggestions.

Ful.

The Roman Empress.

21

Ful. No, no; here's no place for the least suspicion
Against the testimony of this truth,
Which from the Ladies lips proceeds; who loves you;
Which here this Medal better will declare *gives him a*
Then words, which through respect of you, and of *Medal.*
My self I cannot utter.

Confront this with th' original, and see
If she be well exprest, who thus affects you. *Exit.*

Flo. Let's see if the Inscription shew the same
Person, the picture seems to represent. *turns about the*

Fulvia Empress, second Wife of Valentius, &c. *Medal.*

Is this some real passage, or illusion?
Perchance I dream, and now some lively visions
Play the Impostors on my deluded fancy.

I wish it were so; but that scarce can be;
For though in dreams we think our selves awake,
Yet really awake we know we dream not.

No, I am the lost miserable *Florus*;
And this the cruel *Fulvia*, who destroys me;
And which is strange, with love; a stronger engine
Erected for my ruine, then her hatred.

Who can esteem me innocent? whilst I
Am flexible thought to so foul a crime.

Blast me ye heavens, or else at least these looks,
Which please the Empress: if my heart be chaste,
They are lascivious, and my honor stain:
And this sufficient is to make me guilty.

Was ever case like mine? if I declare
My self a lover then I lose my friends;
And if I am belov'd, my Prince I injure
In highest point of honor, and what's strange,
Th'offendor is in both wayes innocent. *Exit.*

Antonia.

'Tis strange my Husbands love should fade so soon,
Which I have sought to cultivate with all
Art, duty, offices which can become

A

The Roman Empress.

A subtle woman, or complacent wife.
 Perchance I am deceiv'd, and with some false
 Surmise create within my self true torment.

O Gelosie; o thou quicksighted daughter
 Of thy blind father Love, of whom at last
 Thou prov'st the murd'rer: thou of all things only
 Detested, loathed, hated by thy self;
 Ingenious only in the searching after
 That, which thou wishest could not be found out;
 Or being found, leaves thee in greater torment.

Since in so short a time thy venom has
 Spread through my veins, and poison'd all my thoughts;
 Return to thy infernal mansion, where
 Hatred begot thee, though perchance some share
 Love in thy generation might have,
 To make thy birth double, and so more monstrous:

There be a torment to thy self, and since
 Suspicions are thy choicest nourishment.
 Vex thy self with new fears; never secure,
 As well with those which doubtful are, as sure.

To her Servilius.

Ser. Here comes my poor *Antonia*, methinks,
 The sad reproach of my inconstancy.

Ant. What cause have I giv'n you of late to be
 So much disgusted with my company?

Ser. None, but some other flames have in my breast
 Extinguish't thine, and rob me of my rest.

Ant. What can these strange looks, or this language mean?
 I hope Sir, you intend no breach of faith.

Ser. No, I am forc'd to it against my intention,
 Against my former vows, and my own wishes.

Ant. We all confess, Sir, this unquestion'd truth,
 Mans will cannot be forc't, though it rebel,
 By any power on earth, in heaven, or hell.

Ser. If here's an error, *Florus* should be rather
 Accus'd then I: he, who first join'd our loves,

Has

Has been the occasion of dissolving them,
In shewing me a face of late in beauty
So far transcending thine,
That 'twere impiety not to adore it.

Ant. ——— False and disloyal man ;
Florus and thou shalt sink under the force
Of my revenge, provok't to such a height,
It shall pluck on you both untimely fate.

Ser. Antonia, divert the torrent of
This furious rage some other way ; accuse
Nature, who has to my excessive torment
This beauty form'd, so far excelling thine,
As the moon does the lesser stars out-shine.

Ant. Traytor accuse thy one perfidiousness,
Which makes thee change thy promise, and thy customs.

Ser. I have chang'd the object only, not my custom.

Ant. Th' hast broke thy faith ; this makes thee infamous.
I hope in her thou follow'st, thou wilt see
An hatred equal to my love of thee.

Ser. Antonia examining thy glaſs
Accuse that vulgar beauty, and thy face,
Which on my free-born soul has had no charms
More pow'rful, and such early-fading colours.

Exit.

Ant. ——— Go, go ;
Go, if my beauty be of untimely fate,
In my revenge so shall not be my hate ;
To perfect which, I heaven, and hel will move :
'Tis th' only recompence of injur'd love.

Nature, and Fortune cruel Step-mothers
Are to us women : in our tender years
Our Fathers Palaces to us are Prisons,
Where nor our persons, nor scarce our looks are free :
And afterward, when our maturity
Should change this bondage into liberty ;
We only of all creatures are, who buy
With a vast dowry our own slavery :
Thus only changing a new Master, whom
We purchase to rule o'r our souls, and bodies.

Add

And cast us off thus when he please. Man is
 A bold insolent creature; grand usurper
 Upon the rights of nature; not by his wit
 (For in our age of folly we enslave him)
 But by his force, and number. He makes laws
 Partial t' himself, rigid to us; his vows
 He breaks, ours must be kept; his vices
 Pass only for his gallantries; ours are
 Branded with foul and horrid names & affright us.
 Ambition in us, in him is honor;
 And our irregular appetites in him
 Pass for the noble passions of his love;
 Not only to be excus'd, but commended.

Who made these laws and customs? did our Sex
 Ever give up their voice, and suffrages?
 No: there's no right, or obligation then
 We should obey these orders made by men.
 So partial Judges: th' Empress and I will see
 To vindicate our sexes libertie. *Exit.*

ACT III.

Florus; Seruilus. Carbo.

Car. That which you tell us, is a secret of
 Importance, that *Artemus* should be
 Your Father, and converse here in our Camp.

Flo. 'Tis True; but I am now relating to you
 Th' occasion which has brought *Artemus* hither.
 The wild lust of her Father, not content
 To violate the chastity of Virgins;
 The faith of Matrons, Widows' vows; at last
 Lasciviously incoached on his Daughter
 The horror of which thought frightened her
 (Such was her virtuous innocence) she sought

Her

Her refuge from her enemies, and fled
From him her Father, as her greatest foe.
So by this means fortune affords my arms
Th' happy occasion of protecting virtue,
I think her self in a corporeal shape.

Ser. This passion of your love strangely deceives you.
Virtue needs no external form, or beauty
Seldom puts any on ; and yet more seldom
'Tis that they can agree.
Chiefly in Courts, like jarring Elements,
Where one proves the confusion of the other ;
Beauty at least to Virtue ever fatal.

Car. He tells you true, the outward shape of your
Aurelia shews no internal goodness.

Flo. ————— Sure correspondent to
Th' external splendor must be lodg'd in her
A soul deserving such an habitation ;
As greater lustre of some sparkling jewels
Denotes in them no less intrinsique virtue.

Car. I can compare *Aurelia's* eyes to stars
As bright as you, but of ill influence,
And look on her arrival to the Camp,
Like the approach of some ill threatning Comet.
Th' heavens preserve our General, and us.

Flo. What raises these strange Omens of my love,
Which some will envy, but the most approve.

Ser. Most will condemn, others oppose ; think not
Aurelia's beauty will not raise you Rivals,
To bring the Prize in contestation.

Flo. These motives of vain fear I scorn ; farewell,
I'll seek some other friends to gratulate
The happiness of my triumphing fate.

Exit.

Car. I am amaz'd to think *Arsenius*,
Great Captain General of our enemy,
Should be his Father ; and here in disguise
Converse within our Camp. *Ser.* 'Tis a strange secret.

Car. To me it seems improbable, that he
Who was surpriz'd with the meer shadow of

His Mistress, should remain inflexible
 To the tears and entreaties of a Father :
 What's your opinion ? *Ser.* That we play the fool !
 Egregiously ; remember we are Souldiers
 As well as Courtiers ; lets cast off this dissembling.

Car. Since you advance, I'll meet you : Sir I hear
 Of your intention of divorce, to make
 Room for *Aurelia's* entrance in your bed ;
 Whose love I seek with as great fervency
 As you ; we both forfeit our hopes, if this
 Rival be not remov'd ; th'effecting which
 His open folly has made easie. *Ser.* True ;
 As Scholars prove ill Souldiers, so these Souldiers
 Prove the worst Courtiers ; their franc and gen'rous natures
 Make them as unfit for the air of Courts,
 As birds are for the Element of water.

Who but a General bred up in Camps
 Like *Florus*, such a secret would reveal,
 On which divulg'd, his ruin does depend,
 To us, who shall raise our selves from his fall.

Car. In Court it would a Solœcism appear,
 So gross an error should unpunisht go :
 There is no reason for't, he must give way,
 Though both of us can't have this glorious prey :
 And consequently in our Gen'als fall,
 The one of us must find his Funeral.

Exeunt.

Valentius, Statilius, Honorius, with Court-Attendants, &c.

Val. Statilius, the Gods are equally
 Willing to make us great, as afterwards
 They are averse long to conserve that greatness.
 We often see our fall, or miserie
 Bring up the rear of our prosperitie.

Sta. Your Majesty knows well that our condition
 Admits not of a sincere happiness,
 Without the mixture of some discontent.

Kal. Whilst *Italy* and the Provinces applaud

My

My victories, and happiness, I fear,
And yet perceive no true cause of my fear.

Hon. 'Tis generously to be rejected then,
As being grounded upon no foundation.

Val. Thence it takes deeper root. Old Mariners
Expect a horrid tempest, when the sea
Rouls boystrous waves, and yet no winds are stirring.
Last night, or rather 'twixt the confines of
The day and night, the lively, but the dismal
Impressions of a dream have so tormented
My spirit, I shall have no quiet till
I see the menacing effects blown over.

Hon. These are deceptions of the fancy, not
Deserving the attention of a Prince.

Val. So often verifi'd in all reports,
Who can assure us these are fallacies?

Hon. The rare, divine, admired *Epicurus*,
Who with the light of reason has dispel'd
These golden fears, these terrifiers of
The vulgar spirits; did you but imagine
Th' innumerable multitude of such
Who either will deceive, or be deceiv'd:
Nothing so beneficial you'll see
As a judicious incredulitie.

Sta. 'Tis a signe of a poor and mollifi'd
Spirit to fear all events of this nature;
And to fear nothing a stupiditie.

Hon. A virtue Sir, if once opinion can
Remove us from our solid station,
We never after shall firm footing find.
An understanding must be, to see clear,
Purg'd from all superstition and fear.

Val. It is an happiness to be resolute
In our opinions, though erroneous.
O that I could like thee, *Honorius*,
Believe these terrors follies: my dream was,
That my dear Wife, and eldest Son; O horror!
Before we see the Sun once more ascend

To his meridian altitude, should fall
At my feet murder'd by me in furious rage.

Sta. The vanity herein appears, that in
The short extent of one dayes compass so
Horrid a fact must be accomplisht, which
Requireth years for the maturing of it.
The innocence and virtue of the Empress,
And Prince are yet unblemisht, insuspected.

Val. 'Tis true ; but if the fates will make *Valentius*
Unhappy, they will make him first imprudent.

Hon. The happiness of great *Valentius*
Depends upon the will of great *Valentius* :
Not upon, fortune, or destiny.

These are but idle names of idle Writers,

—————Unhappily invented,
To terrifie mankind, and sow the seeds
Of error, folly, superstition in us :
Who should rely on our own proper virtues ;
For man is only on himself dependant ;
Not fate, nor fortune, nor his stars Ascendant.

Val. Thinkst thou not some celestial pow'rs above
Direct the course of our affairs? *Hon.* No Sir
They rest secure, happy not thinking on them,
Nor us, such little crawlers here on earth.
Nor is it human wit, but rather human
Folly, which now seems the disposer of them.
Observe but with what vermin the age swarms,
And how the world is strangely peopled with
Armies of murderers in ambitious wars ;
Or else the instruments of our luxury.

Val. I am told by my Philosophers at Court,
Consult'd, and interrupted dreams are not
To be regarded ; but when that order is
In them which was in mine, they are advises
From heaven sent to tell us what shall happen.

Hon. ———In the distracted Chaos
There never was greater confusion,
Then is in them, and in their mad opinions ;

Which

Which no more credit should find in us, then
Poetique fancies, or fanatique dreams.

Sta. ————— For my part ;
Ere since I first open'd my eyes to make
Inspection into the darkness of
Human affairs, and nature, I streight saw
Nothing was suited to our capacities ;
But ever thought Philosophers, and such
Who give themselves up to their contemplations.
Most ignorant, and useles of all men.

Hon. ——— They first corrupt our natural wit,
And judgement with an artificial folly,
And then our genuine customs with learn'd vices.

Sta. Rome, as she grew more learned, grew less valiant.

Hon. These studies in her Senators destroy'd
That bravery in them, which subdu'd the world.

Sta. Science, and vice like twins at the same time
Found birth in her, and grew up to perfection.

Hon. She ow'd her ruin to no other cause,
Then when she chang'd from *Martial* to be learn'd.

Sta. O let it not be said that this disease,
In the corrupting of the judgement of
The great *Valentius*, twice should fatal be
Thus to the Roman Name, and Majestie.

Val. I am of no such accidents afraid,
Where prudence or my will can give me aid.

Hon. We boldly should condemn, not fear those ils,
Which cannot be opposed by our wills.

Val. To foster hopes is a meer vanitie
When we foresee certain our miserie.

Sta. A Prince who thus thinks that his State impairs
A fruitless subject gives himself of cares.

Val. He rightly thinks of fortune, who suspects
Her various in the persons she affects.

Hon. The change of fortune rather should erect
The spirit of an Emperour, then deject.

Val. Unhappy state of Princes ! whom her favours
Sometimes betray, more then her frowns ; for they

Corrupt us, and our natures mollifie :
We gain our honor in adversitie.

*Exeunt.**Fulvia.*

What shall I do ? sustain the gravitie,
And person of imperial Majestie ?
Or lose the hopes else of an ardent lover.
Rebellious passions of my distracted soul,
Fear, love, desire, envy : why d'y'e thus
Torment my mind with separated factions ?

Though thou art here a most unjust Usurper,
Love, I'll my self rather submit to thee :
Divided power is greater tyranny.
Speak then, and hope ; happy success may make
Our impious actions pass for honorable,
Much more the faults of love, which in all breasts
Find their Apologies ; for no man shall,
Seeing *Florus*, not absolve the Criminal :
And Ladies, which have known him, cannot chuse,
But say the cause brings with it the excuse.

*To her Florus.**O here he comes*

As I expected ! *Florus*, I hope you have
Confronted the Original with the
Pourtrait I gave you, and are pleas'd with both.

Flo. Your Majesty was not deceiv'd, I shall
Declare my self an enemy to those,
Who shall their treacherie practise on that beauty.

Ful. Now I am happy, I perceive he loves me.
Let no suspicious gelosie torment you ;
You only then need fear a Rival, when
Another *Florus* should be like your self.

aside.

Flo. In breasts where love has no admision found,
Gelosie can find none ; he need not fear
A Rival, who no lover is. *Ful.* Not you
A lover ; can I be so much deceiv'd ?

Flo. Yes ; when my reason shall direct the passion.

Ful.

The Roman Empress.

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Ful. ————— Love joyn'd with reason
Is a monster, and not that noble gheft,
Which should command all in a Princes brest;
Fear, counsel, reason either chasing thence,
Or else reducing to his obedience.

Flo. My honor then must regulate my actions.

Ful. Which never should inspire a noble heart
With cruelty, but rather with compassion
Of a distressed Lady. *Florus*, you
Knew that to be *Fulvia's* Picture, I gave you.

Flo. 'Tis true, and as I think by some mistake
Unluckily convey'd into these hands.

Ful. No Sir, be not deceiv'd, the present was
Made by mature election.

Flo. I reverence it as your gift, and as
The Pourtrait of my Sovereign adore it.

Ful. The name of Sovereign is unsuitable
To my affection, or my present state:
Call me your servant; that familiar term.
Becoms him, who predominats o're all
The powers of my soul.
Disdain not one, who ever hath preserv'd
Her reputation unstain'd, her faith
Inviolated, and to you alone
Commits them both; one action of my life
Should not reproach me with inconstancie.
Compassionate an Empress, who entreateth
That us'd to command: O *Florus*, put
A period to my life, or to my torment.

Flo. ————— O ye immortal Gods,
Can you see this offence, and suffer it?

I hope your Majestie will harbor thoughts
Which more become your royal dignitie;
And of your own dishonor, and my shame,
In hearing mention'd this licentious flame.

Ful. If it be lawless, 'twill the more aspire;
Resistance will prove vain to my desire.

Flo. O Madam, let reason triumph above

aside.

This

The Roman Empress.

This passion, and honor over your love ;
Think how I am the Subject of *Valentius*.

Ful. Sufficient curb to this repulse should be
The thought how a great Empress loves you ; and
Loves you alone ; and the Commandress of
The world submits her self to your commands.

Flo. I can't conceive your Majestie as Empress,
But at that time Wife also of my Sovereign.

Ful. If you desire happiness, think only
Of my Imperial dignitie and power.

Flo. Who by their passions thus enslav'd have lost
Their libertie, cannot of power boast.

Ful. If thou despisest an obsequious lover,
Thou shalt the rage fear of an incens'd Lady.

Flo. I apprehend more danger from the love,
Then anger of her who despises honor.

Ful. If thy audacious insolence contemns
My threatnings, their effects shall make thee tremble.

Flo. No violence, no hidden treacherie
Can affright him, who never fear'd to die.

Ful. ————— If that which I intend
An ignominious death cannot thee move,
Thou hast less sense of honor, then of love.

Flo. Which cannot be, when the occasion only,
Springs from the hatred of an immodest woman.

Ful. Thou shalt feel miserie. *Flo.* I can conquer it.

Ful. Thou shalt repent. *Flo.* No, I am ever constant.

Ful. He be reveng'd. *Flo.* I can defend my self.

Ful. To slight a Lady never was unpunisht.

Flo. Offence of honor can't be tollerated.

Ful. My hatred now shall equalize my love.

Flo. And my contempt my former reverence.

Ful. O thou unhappy *Fulvia* ! what does it
Avail thee to be Empress of the world,
And canst not make thy self belov'd or fear'd.

Flo. O miserable *Florus*, to what purpose
Can serve thy innocence, if thou becom'st
The odious object of anothers crime.

Exit.

Ful.

Ful. Ah cruel creature ! he is gone : if ever
Any had cause to murmur against nature,
'Tis I, in giving him, so like *Valentius*,
A form and shape fatal to my repose.
I cherisht the first heat, enter'd my breast
Inferisibly as an acquainted ghest :
But seeking after how it did aspire,
I found my nuptial torch lighted this fire :
So that I can't reproach my self with shame,
My first and lawful love kindling this flame :
Then all the fault's in him, who thus rejects me.

O thou disdain, the conquerour of love,
Which conquers all things else, enter my breast ;
There, till revenge expel thee, take no rest :
Incenst by thee, let all my spirits aspire,
Mixing in combat with this tyrannique fire
For victorie. A Princess thus incenst
With love, and rage thus, more is to be fear'd,
Then cruel fires, fierce plagues, devouring seas,
Or what most terrifies our human nature.

To her Aurelia.

An. You Majestie is much perplext, that passion
Is alwaies great, which can't contain it self.

Ful. I must conceal to her th' unlucky motive
Of my disturbance. Alas ! *Aurelia*,
My miseries are ever fruitful in
Producing others : scarce my tears are dry'd
For the late losses of our Family ;
But I must new supplies find, to lament
The fresh disgrace now falling on my issue.

An. Who can be so unjust to injure you ?
Or who can be so arrogant t'offend
That pow'r, which is so armed for revenge ?

Ful. *Valentius* ; enemy of his own children,
Because I think they're mine, or else because
They're Nephews of *Hostilius* your Father,

F

aside.

intends

Intends that *Florus* shall be now advanc'd
 To the Imperial dignitie, to their
 And my perpetual reproach, that *Florus*,
 Th' oppressor of my Father, and who seeks
 The ruin now of yours. *An.* A happy occasion
 Opens a field to the triumphant passage
 Of my revenge ; I can my self disclose
 Now to so great an enemy of *Florus*.

aside.

O let that beauteous serenity,
 Madam, return, which us'd t' adorn your looks.

—————Y' have open'd your disease
 To the Physitian, who alone can cure you.

Ful. Who you ? become of late an enemy
 To your own father, interest'd in
 The quarrel of *Valentius* against him.

An. Your Majesty's deceiv'd, I only act
 A counterfeited part ; I have defam'd

—————My Father as attemptor
 Upon my virgin modestie, that I
 The better might secure his tott'ring power.
 I fain my self in love with *Florus* ; and
 My flight here to *Valentius*, as my refuge,
 That I more safely may procure their ruin.

Ful. *Aurelia*, we are then in the same int'rest,
 Will, and affection more conjoin'd, then blood.

An. *Arsenius* has let me know
 Of late a secret, which will raise your wonder ;
 How *Florus* is his Son, and how he is
 In love with me, seeking a mutual love ;
 Which understanding, with notice of my Father
 I fill'd the old mans head with hopes, and joy
 Of my affection for his Son, to whom he has *shews her a letter.*
 A letter writ here on that very subject,
 Apt either to make him desert his Prince,
 In hope of gaining me ; or else t' accuse him
 Of treason in his correspondence with
Arsenius enemy of *Valentius* ;
 Who thus abus'd shall see himself depriv'd

The Roman Empress.

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Of this his Gen'ral, our great Adversary.

Ful. My Brothers present danger, and my Sons
Disgrace, whose fame *Florus* eclipses, makes
Him subject of my hatred ; and the mem'ry
Of my poor Father, murderd by *Valentius*,
Makes him alike. *An.* Madam, then let us strive
To be reveng'd of both ;

And with an emulation, who shall put
Her malice into speediest execution ;
Not doubting of success : 'Tis great assurance
To those, who seek revenge, to have so faithful
Companions in the stratagems, as you have.

Ful. 'Tis true my dear *Aurelia*, let me embrace thee
For this thy brav'ry ; though I envy it,
So far advancing thy unriper years.

An. This day shall shew here what the furious rage
Of an ambitious Lady can produce ;
And the interest and gelosie of State,
And emulation, Madam, of your glory.

Ful. Expect from me all, that can be expected
From a contriving subtle wit, and cunning
Hypocrisie joyn'd with a perfect malice.

An. Let *Florus*, let *Valentius* perceive
Th' entrance of *Aurelia* in their Camp.
Let fear and modesty, companions of
Our sex, so much enclin'd to virtue, be
Now cast off by the thoughts of our revenge.

Ful. My passion shall esteem no sin unlisenc'd.
In me let one crime still beget another ;
And let it not be thought a crime, which does
Not multiply it self in many others ;
And ever with increase, the latter greatest.

An. Madam mistake not ; and let nothing pass
With us for criminal, but what is virtuous.

Ful. 'Tis the delightful fruit of vice to think,
That no vice, which is caus'd by interest.

An. True of our selves, better then that of state ;
Which no great Prince values at any rate,

The Roman Empress.

Ful. They never else in Court or Camp would find,
With all their pomp, tranquility of mind.

An. 'Tis on this ground that I'll prepare to act
Those things I cannot think, unless enrag'd.
Posteritie shall ever curse, though scarce
Believe that, which I'll put in execution.

Ful. Compar'd with me thou shalt as innocent
Appear, and did the state but know how high
The provocation is of my disdain,
It would with trembling fear the consequence.

An. Who injur'd me the favor shall not have
To die, unless that I accompanie
That death with an eternal infamie.

Ful. That merits not the title of revenge,
When we destroy andemie, and give
Leave to his reputation still to live.

Exeunt.

Valentius. Florus. Statilius. Honorus, with Court-Attendants.

Val. Since not as yet possess of *Rome*, we cannot
Express our joy with usual festivals,
For this adoption of *Florus* in the Empire;
Lets see what sports, and what divertisements
Our Camp affords us in our slaves and captives.

*Here very conveniently may be brought in
some divertisements of the Stage.*

Val. I never lik't the fancie of *Augustus*;
Nor of some other Princes, who have from
The vices, imperfections of successors
(Sometimes their Sons, Brothers, nearest Allies)
Sought to illustrate to posteritie
Their shameful glory, so injurious to them,
And to the present age : A solid virtue
Needs no such foyle, or shadow to set off
Her beauteous lustre ; and this is the reason,
Why I omitting my own issue joyn'd
To me in blood, not virtue, *Florus*, have
Destin'd thee for my successor ; and to morrow

Com-

Companion, and Colleague in my great Empire.

Sta. Your Majesty declares in this Election,
No passion has an influence o're your judgement.

Val. Since 'tis not in my power to create him
Heir of my blood, I'll make him of my glorie.

But *Florus* why amaz'd? thy merit should
Prevent thy marvel at thy high advancement :
Honor should ne'r surprize a noble brest,
But enter as a long expected ghest.

Flo. My silence was th' effect of grief, and wonder ;
The last occasion'd thus to see a Father
Devest himself of natural affections,
To represent a Prince more absolute :
My sorrow from the sense of envy springs,
Which will pursue so great prosperitie.

Val. Your grief were juster, if your exploits had not
Deserved envy ; and your wonder, if
Your merit had not forced this Election.

Hon. He need not envie fear, who by his actions
Worthy of envie has secur'd himself
In a safe station, above the reach of envie.

Flo. The title of *Cæsarean* Majestie
Is too illustrious for my extraction,
The charge too weighty for these shoulders ; which
I fear will faint under their glorious burden.

Sta. Who first knows how to rule himself, like you,
Seems destin'd by the providence of heavens
For the command of Scepters, and of Empires.

Val. Fear nothing *Florus* ; chearfully assume
This greatness, as thy valors recompence ;
A purchase, which with loss of blood, life, honor
So often is sought after by ambition :
For the proud man finds that the boistrous flood,
Which rowls him to this Port, still runs in blood.

Exeunt.

ACT.

A C T. IV.

Valentius. Carbo. Antonia.

Val. **N**OW I perceive, as thou hast told me, that
 This my erroneous pursuing of
 The customs of Princes my Ancestors,
 (Which makes me as I write and speak with pens,
 And Tongues of other men; just so I hear
 My informations with the ears of others)
 Has led me in a labyrinth of errors,
 Where truth could never find me out, had you
 Not been her trusty guides. For thou O *Carbo*
 Must be content to have this noble Lady
 Companion in thy glory. *Car.* I am proud of it.
Val. 'Twas she who first made known to me, from whence
 Arose the clouds, which have of late eclips'd
 The mirth, and beautie of my dearest Consort:
 I say 'twas she; prepare thy faith to hear
 Far greater wonders, than thou hast related.
 This Traytor *Florus* in the presence of
 This noble Lady has solicited
 My Empress, O horror! to betray
 My honor; nay startle not; that's my part,
 Whom the world falsely calls the great *Valentius*.

Car. I was surpriz'd; but thinking how the greatest
 Of vices is ingratitude; there's none
 Of which I think he cannot be found guilty.

Val. This I confess: but alas! here his utmost
 Cruelty should have spar'd his Prince: I am
 The soul diffus'd through the vast body of
 The Empire, thus expos'd in all parts to
 His wounds, and injuries; at least herein
 He should have had compassion of his friend

His

His Benefactor, Father by adoption ;
Which merits more then if I were by nature.

Car. Sir, he has told me, he esteem'd all things
Lawful to gain an Empire, or a Mistress :
And in a scorning manner oft would say ;
In other things let justice be observ'd.

Val. O ye immortal Gods ! why has your care
Given us a touchstone to distinguish our
Adulterate gold, and no mark to discern
The treacherous hearts of false perfidious men.

————— If this be true ;
Confound him with your sharpest thunderbolt :
But 'tis too true ; and if I further stay
To question it ; I fear I shall become
Procurour of those dire events upon me,
Portended in my last nights dreams to happen
Within so short a time.

Antonia retire : I'll have a care
To vindicate my honor : his proud Laurels,
Which from *Joves* thunder are secure, I'll blast.
But let this secret make no further progress.

Ant. My prudent care shall not fail to correct
This fault, to which our sex is incident.

Val. A Prince, who tolerates a known disgrace,
Becomes the subject of the vulgar scorn.

Ant. Honor, once sought to be betray'd, is never
Secure, so long as the Offendor lives.

Val. Gelosie entred in a Prince, no other
Assistant needs, to hasten his revenge.

Ant. Which, when it is of a slow pace, we find
'Tis signe of weakness in a Princes mind.
Let him th' effects Sir of your anger prove,
Who thus hath undervalued your love ;
In prudent Monarques, like your self, t'appear
Not to be fear'd, should be your only fear.

Car. You Majesty's perplext. *Val.* But why should I
So low thoughts of my self have ; and so high
Of his bold insolent temeritie.

Exit.

Good

Good *Carbo* have the patience to repeat
 Thy story over ; though in it ev'ry passage
 Creates new wounds, and ulcers in my soul.
 Thou saidst, the Master of my light Cavalrie,
Macrinus, was not Father of this *Florus* ;
 But that *Arsenius*, the sworn enemy of
 My person, and my dignitie has made
 The world the present of this dissembling Monster :
 Can this be so ? *Car.* Your Majestie may rest
 Assur'd I heard it from his own relation ;
 And how besides he has in a disguise
 Convertt here with him in our Camp ; where he
 Assur'd him of the consent of *Hostilius*
 For his obtaining of the fair *Aurelia*,
 The Idol of his soul ;
 With the rich dowrie of the Roman Empire.

Val. Which his pernicious hopes securely streight
 Devour'd, with consentment to my ruine.

Car. Yes ; and with invitation to my self,
 Joyning with him, to take part with *Hostilius*.
 See where the Empress comes : I take my leave.

Exit,

Valentius. Fulvia. Antonia.

Ful. Now if, *Antonia*, as thy promise was,
 Thou hast distill'd the poison in his ears ;
 I shall perceive streight by the operation.

aside.

Val. My dearest *Fulvia*, since all griefs and sorrows
 Divided are betwixt the Wife and Husband,
 Th' occasions also should be so ; if then
Antonia's care without your intimation
 Has let me know the cause of your distemper,
 I must obtain her pardon ; let then thy
 Former serenity of looks dispel
 Those clouds of sorrow from that brow to mine ;
 Where they hang thicke already ; but I'll have
 Them wash't away in blood of the offenders.

Ful. With whose let mine be joynd ; Sir 'tis the only

Favor

The Roman Empress

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Favor I beg here on my knees ; by all
The former merits, with which the constant duty
Of an obedient Wife has e're been able
T'oblige a Husband ; by the rising hopes
Of young *Valentius* ; and the other pledges
And fruits of our so constant loves, till now
By this accursed accident disturb'd.

kneels.

Val. They are not : rise then ; O let me not see *takes her up.*
My idol thus bow, and encline to me.

Ful. Sure you look on me with false eyes, or else
You see me chang'd into a loathsome creature :
Suspicion of guilt in an Empress makes her
Seem foul, and guiltie to her self and others.

So I am in effect : a Viper though
He casts no poison forth ; his very touches
Are venomous : th' offering to embrace me
In *Florus* has methinks with leprosie
Infected all my parts. Good Sir have mercie
On your poor *Fulvia* here ; and let me die ;
When life is now my greatest miserie.

kneels again.

Val. His blood shall rather satisfy th' offence,
Who trespass on thy spotless innocence :
And though he seemeth at too cheap a rate
By single death his crime to expiate ;
'Tis recompenc't at once to see him die,
And live in a perpetual infamie ;
Whilst thou the best of women ; glorie of
The present age, and honor of thy sex,
Shalt like a star of the first magnitude,
Shine glorious in the firmament of honor.
However yet, my dearest *Fulvia*,
The heavens in their happiness delay :
Thy presence, though so much desired there,
T'instruct the age is necessary here.

embraces her.

Ful. My noble Lord, my dutie,
So hitherto obsequious to your will,
Shall strive then to obey your last commands.

Val. O now thou speakest like *Fulvia*, and thy self :

G

Thy

Thy passions can never long transforme thee:
 Come let us go to my Pavilion, and
 Consult upon the manner, how to put
 In speedy execution our revenge:
 The just effects of which shall never cease,
 Till in the Traitors bloud I find my peace

*Exeunt.**Florus. Honorius.*

Flo. 'Tis strange methinks, *Honorius*, that you,
 An *Epicurean* by Sect should be
 An enemy of love; the greatest pleasure,
 When once obtain'd, in the enjoyment of
 What we call perfect beauty; a happiness
 So frequently desir'd, so seldom found.

Hon. The nature of true pleasure can't consist
 In the delights of love, which leave the soul
 Not satisfi'd, when the most satiated;
 Whilst in her interchangeably there fight
 Restless disgust, and restless appetite.
 True pleasures no remorse, but leave behind
 Them still a grateful odor in the mind.

Flo. They ill discourse of love, who are no lovers.

Hon. It troubles me to see the royal fort
 Of noble *Florus* heart thus yielded up.

Flo. 'Tis given up to him, who conquers all things;
 And will in time the brave *Honorius* brest,
 Where virtue keeps so strong a garrison.

Hon. It must be weak, if so contemptible
 An Adversary can his entrance force.

Flo. Neglect of the Enemy destroys the valiant:

Hon. The fear of him dejecteth noble spirits.

Flo. Who apprehends his Adversary may
 Preserve his honor, though he lose the day.

Hon. Esteem of him is distrust in our selves.

Flo. A prudent fear companion is of valor.

Hon. 'Tis rather of an irresolved mind.

The Roman Empress.

34

To them Aurelia.

Flo. But stay, behold : here breaks the beauteous light,
Which will these difficulties cleer.

Honorius stand firm ; what means this change ? *Honorius sur-*
Let not thy actions contradict thy words. *priz'd at her beauty.*

Hon. My hearts unmov'd : but the external sense
In such surprisals has no sure defence. *exit.*

An. Yonder he comes ; his eyes are fixt on mine ;
Those false lights, which will lead him to his ruine.

Love and Disdain, two raging firebrands,
Are of the mind ; their common residence
Is in the heart ; but raise a general
Disturbance in the soul, confounding all
Her faculties. They are of equal force,
Contending for the prize with emulation ;
But in effect and nature contrary ;
The one producing hatred, and the other
Gentle affection : when these fierce Combatants
In duel are ; the heart too narrow a field
For two such Foes groans languishing in torment,
Till one the victor shall subdue the other ;
As here Disdain has Love in me, by force
Compelling me to act a damned part
Against my nature, conscience, and my heart.

My honor does depend upon his death ; *aside.*
And yet perchance my life depends on his.
But I am now engag'd past all retreat.

Flo. O my *Aurelia* (pardon this presumption)
If I am bold to call you so upon
So new acquaintance ; my love's of longer date.

An. And so is mine ; however that love's poor,
Which time requires to grow up to perfection.
Mine of another nature was ; at once
Finding conception, and maturity ;
Both at first sight of you. *Flo.* But what was stranger ;
I found my heart enflamed from the shadow,

The Roman Empress.

And picture of you only : from dead colours
 Love first found life in me : I felt the heat,
 Before I saw the light : wonder not then
 If I stand trembling in the presence of
 My Goddess, when the lustre of her only
 Image I could not with these eyes sustain ;
 Which from that time is ever in my thoughts.

An. 'Tis long, amongst your very enemies,
 That fame has painted your illustrious person,
 Heroique actions (though perchance with colours
 Defective from the life) and your great merit :
 Wonder not then, that I forgetting my
 Imperial dignity, and virgin blushes ;
 And other ceremonious restraints,
 So suddenly am thus become your captive.

Flo. Can this be true, *Aurelia* ? can the heavens
 So prodigally pour on me their blessings.

An. To see you ; and to fall in love with you,
 Sir, things are different ; but by those heavens
 You mentioned, happened to me in one moment.

Flo. Why should we fear, that time should then destroy,
 What time did not produce ; that's our affection.

An. 'Tis true ; but violent flames, like ours, we see
 Consume their nourishing fuels, and themselves ;
 And we think happier those, whom love inspires
 With moderate heats, with moderate desires :
 Which keep themselves alive like glowing fires.

Flo. My life, my soul, my dear *Aurelia*,
 Make here no mention of sinister surmises.
 My brest not comprehending well the greatness
 Of my felicitie, gives place too fast
 Already to my fears. I cannot think
 My fortune unforeseen will constant prove.

An. Sir you may fix her, if you execute
 What the sense of this Letter will perswade you.

*Gives him a Letter, which
 he reads as follows.*

Flo..

Flo. Florus, I have, through my affection, to you, restored to liberty your friend, and my prisoner of war Honorius; who has discover'd to me your secret love of our Princess Aurelia; from whom I have obtain'd a correspondent affection for you, by the consent of her Father: who much desires to adopt such a Son for his Successor in the Empire. The affection, and interest you have in the Army, ministers a fair occasion of revenging your self of a cruel adversary of your Father, by disarming Valentius of his chiefest forces. I expect your sodain answer, and concurrence to your own happiness.

Arfenius..

What's this I see? new treacheries against me?

This Letter is writ by *Arfenius*.

How comes *Aurelia* to present it, who

aside.

Declares her self enemy of *Hastilius*.

Can the dissemble? a person of such honor?

Au. ——— What strange suspension is this which I see,

Sir, in your thoughts, and looks suddenly chang'd?

Be resolute; the question's only here,

Whether you will concur in the procuring

Your Father's happiness, your own, and mine.

Flo. I can no amorous correspondence purchase

At such a rate, thus forfeiting my honor.

Au. Sir 'twas plebeian folly

Which first rais'd Idols; and then worshipt them;

And amongst others this of honor; but

I hope your thoughts fly higher, not confin'd

Within the limits of law, custom, justice;

Shackles for Common people, not for Princes;

Great Ravagers of sea, and land like you.

Flo. Unhappy *Florus*! what a coelestial shape

A Fury here has taken to betray thee.

—— Vile woman take thy Letter;

throws back the Letter.

Inveigle some less cautious with these arts.

I lov'd thee, whilst I thought thee lover of

Thy honor; but do now as much detest thee,

As I do thy most detestable crime.

I could now kill thee ; for though little honor
 Would in't appear ; the action commendable
 Would be to purge the world of so infectious
 A Pestilence : yet live ; thou wilt resent
 Thus, I believe, the greater punishment.

half draws.

An. Aurelia ; now 'tis time to come to action ;
 Repentance is too late : crimes of this nature,
 If once begun, are ne'r secure till finisht.

puts up.

Friends, Officers, Commanders, hasten
 To the defence of a distressed Lady, *cries out near the Tents.*
 An innocent Virgin, an unhappy Princess.

To them Valentinus, Statilius, Fulvia, &c.
as out of the Prætorian Tents.

Val. VVast you *Aurelia*, who made this outcry ?

An. Yes, great *Valentinus*, 'twas I ; 'twas I ;

The most unfortunate *Aurelia*,

For whom no place I see will afford refuge :

For what security can I my self

Promise from your protection, when your General,

My Fathers private friend, threatens by force

To bring me back to his Camp, perswaded by

This Letter, which he has cast into my hands, *gives the Letter*

That I fondly in love must yield my self *to Valentinus.*

His prey, to satisfy my Fathers pleasure,

My present enemies, who persecutes

My honor, dearer to me than my life.

His rage has been so violent on my
 Refusal, that he drew his sword upon me ;

A poor distressed woman !

Deny this Villain if thou canst ; see there

His sword yet scarcely sheath'd. *Flo. Sir hear me speak.*

Val. Perfidious Traitor, interrupt her not.

An. ———— Sir I hope

You'l as a Prince your patronage afford

kneels.

To the distressed, and as a Judge condemn

So foul a criminal.

Look

Look on me not as Daughter of a Tyrant,
And of your Enemy; but as the Niece
Of *Fulvia*, your pious virtuous Empress.

rises.

If I cannot obtain revenge, I'll rather
Chuse gloriously to die by my own hands,
Then afford matter to anothers crime;
Here, I swear by those Gods, who see me injur'd.

Flo. Your Majesty will let me speak. *Val.* I will not.
O ye celestial powers, in what strange darkness
Are our human affairs involv'd: from you
We know not what to ask, or what to fear.
So oft our wishes prove our fatal ruin:
So oft by what we fear'd, we are preserv'd.
I never sought your favours with such fervent
Prayers for my self, as for this monster; whom
Mov'd with a false inspired love, I have
From his green years here foster'd in my bosom;
Preserv'd his beauteous youth from all abuse,
And afterward, before his age admitted,
Heap't honors on him to afford him matter,
In all the three parts of the world, of Triumph;
Where I have made his name glorious and fear'd,
That at the last I might fear him my self.

Enl. ———— Sir I could wish you'd read
His Fathers private Letter; but alas!
I fear 'twill turn your passion into rage.

Val. I will; to disarm him of all excuse. *He is reading the letter*

Ful. Now I triumph to see thy boasting fate *at some distance.*
Bow, and submit it self to *Fulvia's* hate.

An. And from this moment I esteem my self *To Florus apart.*
Happy; now I have made thee miserable.

Flo. O cruel creatures, leave me to my self.

An. No; I'll torment thee here; when thou art dead,
My Brothers ghost shall act that part; whom thou
Inhumanly didst murder in cold blood.

Flo. 'Twas only by the chance of war he fell.

An. Know once, thou wert the only object of
My love, as now of hatred; which when any

Remorse

Remorse of conscience would extinguish in me, *Plucks forth the*
See here; thus with that blood I wipe away. *blondy handkerchief.*

Ful. O my revenge, sweeter than life, or love.

An. O how my joy increases with his torment.

Val. How much I was deceiv'd; he shall straight die. *In read-*
My dearest Fulvia, what's the matter with him? *ing the letter*

Ful. He rages only to see himself discover'd. *Val. often*

Flo. Sir, will your Majesty be pleas'd to hear me. *stamps and*

Val. Speak arrogant Traitor then; only in answer *cries Traitor.*

To what I ask: is this the writing of *Shews the letter.*

Arsenius? confess; is he thy Father?

Flo. Should I deny *Arsenius*, Sir, to be
My Father, I should be ingrateful to him
Who gave me being; which the Gods defend.

Val. It was thy choice then rather to express
Thy gratitude to him, a publick Rebel,
And Traitor to his Country, then to me,
The common Father of her; thy peculiar,
And so great benefactor. See, *Statilius*,
To have *Honorius* found out; as I
Believe confederate in this treason; and
Macrinus, who, perswading us he was
The Father of him, has conceal'd his true
Extraction. *Sta.* I shall obey.

Exit.

Val. Thy crimes so horrid are, that with the greatest
I can't reproche thee; neither stands it with
The reputation of a man of honor,
Much less a Princes dignity to speak them.

To them Honorius. Arsenius.

Oh here opportunely comes another
Conspirator: Tell me, vile man, the reason *To Honorius,*
Of purchasing thy dear-bought libertie
With prostitution of thy honor; 'twas
Thou, who discoverd'st to *Arsenius*, how
Florus was ready to betray me, when
He should obtain *Anrelia* for his bed.

There-

Therefore thou shalt fall with him : it were pity
That cruel death should separate that pair,
Which treacherous friendship has so fast united.

Ar. Unlucky son ! thus betray'd by thy self ;
And I become a miserable Father,
In only seeking a Sons happiness.

Val. What he's astonisht to be thus found out.

Hon. No : 'tis to have my faith suspected only,
Who with expence of blood so oft have purchast
The reputation of my Prince.

Ar. Infortunate *Arsenius* ! constrain'd
Here to accuse thy self of guilt and die
Dishonor'd, to expresse a loving Father
To him; who scarce vouchsaf'd to be thy Son.

Val. When once thy actions have deceiv'd me, I
Should too incautious be, to be surpriz'd
With the fair language of discover'd traitors.

Ar. Ah, cruel Prince ! if there be treacherie, tis mine ;
'Tis mine alone ; *Florus* is guilty of
No other crime, but disobeying of
A Father in obedience to thee ;
Which has alike *Honorius* made ingrateful
To me, the author of his libertie.

I am *Arsenius* : and though I was
Injuriouly upon a false suspicion
Banish'd the Empire ; I'll confesse my self
A criminal, to save the innocent.

Plucks off his disguise.

O spare a Son; become an enemy
To his own Father, to obey his Prince.
O spare a Friend ; whose gallant braverie
So nobly scorn'd my treacherous curtesie.
Let me fall ; with my blood these gray hairs stain,
Who thus alone have my own ruine wrought ;
The fittest sacrifice for thy revenge.

Val. *Arsenius* ! *Arsenius* here ! why this clears all
my doubts.

*Says this
in amaze.*

Flo. Unhappy Father ; this is to reproach
A weakness in me, not to think this heart

Sufficiently couragious to sustain
The injust indignation of one man.

Let not your Majesty deceive your self ;
Had I not been incautious in my love,
My Father had not incur'd this suspition
Of treacherie ; not caus'd by malice, but
Compassion of rash folly in a Son.

Hon. Florus, this language is offensive to
Thy virtue, and our friendship, in supposing
Your self the least way guilty ; in your life
If you to envy subject were, in death
Be not to infamy. Let glory triumph
Over thy nature ; let thy Father perish,
Thy Friend, thy self ; but let thy honor live.

Ar. My only Son, let me fall by thy hands :
Compassion 'tis, not cruelty to take
My life in my old age, and save my honor.

Flo. Take rather, Sir, that life, which you have giv'n
To me now for my miserie ; already
I for my glory have liv'd long enough.

Ho. Cheer up friends ; 'tis for us, who gloriously
Have known the way to live so many years,
Easie to die like Romans in a moment.

Ful. Why thus amus'd ? *An.* What do you ruminate ? *To Va-*

Ant. Sir, as the case stands now, your only counsel *lentius.*
Is to take none. *An.* But think of execution.

Val. As a ship seeming with her full-blown sails
To make a high and rapid course, sometimes
Is checkt, and drawn back by an unknown current :
So I methinks now ardently pursuing
Revenge ; thus instigated by my reason,
And passion feel within me secret motives,
Which would retard my will. But I must break
Through these impediments. They all shall die
And from thee, *Fulvia*, shall receive their sentence.

Thou for thy answering my great benefits
With an unparallel'd ingratitude.

To Florus.

Thou, who prefer'dst before thy loyalty

The Roman Empress

51

A friendship so dishonorable; shalt
Now see the fruits of thy unlucky choice. *To Honorius.*

And thou inur'd to treason, who at last
Betrayd'st thy self, shalt see how the just heavens
Convert thy crimes into thy punishment. *To Arsenius.*

Thus Treason is discover'd in the birth:
The Gods of heaven protect the Gods of earth. *Ex. Val. &c.*

Florus. Honorius. Arsenius.

manent.

Ar. Come let our minds be cheerful : now they shall
No longer pris'ners be ; we are just sailing
Out of the narrow channel of this life
Into the Port, or rather boundless Ocean
Of everlasting, unrestrained freedom.

Ful. 'Tis true ; we are now on the confines of
That vast, immense, inconfm'd libertie,
Which men call Death. *Honorius*, if I lov'd thee
So much here ; I shall more hereafter. *Hon.* No ;
Now comes the period of our friendship ; and
Of what concerns, us but our memory.

There's nothing after death ; and death it self is nothing,
At least in all respects to us ; for whilst
We are, death is not ; and when death is,
We are no more ; and therefore nothing more
Can us concern, or humane nature, when
Our gross and airy parts are separated.

Ful. ——— But the immortal soul
Of the renown'd *Honorius* shall embellish
The heavens ; where it shall give, and receive
New light and lustre, and the just reward
Of his so gloriously transacted life.

Hon. I ne'r indulg'd my self the libertie
Of any vice, as odious in its nature.
I ever honor'd virtue for her self ;
And paid the tribute of my worship to
Th' immortal Gods, as due to those high powers ;
Not for reward, or punishment ; my thoughts

That

The Roman Emperess.

That was, like Merchants, to conditionate
Irreverently with those celestial powers;

So I preserv'd my constancy of mind;
Dejected never by superstitious fears,
Nor puff'd up, and exalted by false hopes;
But still in even balance.

To them Fulvia and Aurelia.

Ar. ————— How importunly here

These women enter, to disturb us in
Our passage to eternal happiness;
Th' Inheritance of noble souls: *Ful. Aurelia,*
These men, deserted of their former valor,
Have now recourse to false opinions of
Philosophers, and Pedants; and would fain
Perswade themselves, that death's no miserie;

But know it is of all the last, and greatest;
Horrid, and terrible in her own nature;
As contrary to the enjoyment of
This pleasant light; of which He now deprive you.

Hon. ————— Impure creatures be gone.

The earth doth many monsters generate;
So does the sea; yet nothing can produce
So mischievous in nature, as a woman,
Pursuing her revenge, and scorning honor.

Mankind should have been propagated from
Some other origine, and not from this;
The fatal source, the occasion, and cause
Of all his miseries, and servitude.

An. Thou base reviler of that sex, which gave
Thee life with hazard of her own, hast here
Extinguist quite all sense of that compassion,
Which I, methoughts, felt moving in my breast.

Ful. Aurelia, what pleasure 'tis to see
Them thus tormented in their rage: if there
Were any peace in death, 'twill make their death
Less peaceable; But you great Generals,

Deep

Deep Politicians, and prime leaders in
Affairs of War and State ; who fill'd the world
With so much noise, tumult, and bloud, with what
Thoughts can you now reflect upon your selves ?
Arm'd yesterday with numerous legions ; now
Thus circumvented by the stratagem
Of us poor silly, simple, virtuous women.

Flo. It is my glory, not a reproach to me
To have such impious creatures seek my death.

Ful. Which thou wilt undergo with high regret ;
I know thy soul enamour'd on thy body.
(Th' object once of my love, as now of hatred)
Cannot but with great indignation quit
Her lovely, pleasant, and delightful mansion.

Flo. Not when she sees the neighborhood infested
With such infectious pestilent diseases.

Ful. She must when she no benefit can find
In death, accompany'd with infamy ;
Which if she have a being, will torment her ;
If not ; then nothing will remain of thee
Hereafter, but an odious memory.

Hon. Let us, as it becomes us, go, and die.

Flo. Death's our admission into liberty.

Ful. Th' entrance into confusion, and darkness,
Out of which no man ever found his way.

Ar. The ease of troubled minds. *Ful.* Their only horror.

Flo. The safe port of the virtuous. *Ful.* Th' only rock,
Which human nature ever apprehends.

Flo. None but such impious creatures, as thou art ;
Who nor in life, nor death can have repose.

Hon. Come let us die th' examples of true virtue.

Ful. The sacrifices of my furious rage.

Ar. We'll freely meet our death. *Ful.* Your execution,
Where you shall fall the trophies of my triumph.

Flo. The types of honor ; how happier 'tis to die
So, then like you, to live in infamie.

Ful. All after death incertain is ; in life
No such felicity as our revenge.

A C T. V.

Aurelia disguis'd.

Ann. **O** Thou bright glorious morning ;
 Thou oriental spring-time of the day,
 Who with thy mixt vermillion colors paintest
 The Skies, these Hills, and Plains : thou dost return
 In thy accustom'd manner ; but with thee
 Shall ne'r return my wonted happiness.

Here thou reducest back with thee, the early
 Light, and the golden Planet of the day,
 To revive, and illustrate with his presence
 The troubled world : thou chasing noisome darkness,
 And clouds of discontent, illuminat'st
 All hearts with joy and chearfulness but mine.

From thy approche all things receive below
 New face, and restoration : The usurping
 Seas, which devour the innocent, become
 Calm in their channels ; the rebellious winds,
 Publick disturbers of the peace of nature,
 Find and give rest to the other elements.
 All beasts of rapin, Lions, Wolves, and Tygers,
 Have their repose : Only a guilty mind
 No cure, no peace, no rest shall ever find.
 Here in my brest, as in her loathed cell,
 Eternal horror will for ever dwell.

To her Sophonia disguis'd like an Eunuch.

Ann. ————— **O** *Sophonia*,
 Since last night parting, we our habits chang'd
 In this disguise, these eyes have known no sleep.
Soph. Nor will not, Madam, if you keep them open

Thus

The Roman Empress.

55

Thus to your tears : mine are long since dried up ;
Unless they'r such, which have so many years
Continually distill'd within my heart.

An. ——— O I shall ne'r sleep more :
The cleer sun-shine of my serener dayes,
In a short moment vanishing, is here
Succeeded by a fearful night of horror,
Which will ne'r know a setting, but in death.

Soph. Thy tender years, *Aurelia*, know not
The nature yet of death ; it is so lately
From me thou learnst to live. *An.* And have not the
Curst fruits of this last passage of my life
Most rarely answer'd the blossoms of thy hopes
Of me ? e're that my virgin honor
Were lost, thus to contaminate my self
With so detestable a parricide.

Soph. Desire of revenge transported you.

An. ——— Which the immortal Gods
Permit us never to execute our selves.

O what infernal torments equal mine !
Hating to live ; I am afraid to die ;
Yet ne'r can hope ease to my miserie.

Now since, I hear, my Brother *Lucius* fell
Only by the unlucky chance of war.
O the most cruel nature of my Father !
Thus to abuse my credulous ignorance.

Soph. Madam, did he inform you otherwise ?

An. Yes ; and perswaded me that *Florus* kill'd him
With his own hands in cold blood after battel ;
And thus deluded, gave me the curst employment
Of cutting of this General in his Camp ;
The only person which I lov'd, of whom
I had the fortune to be lov'd again.

Soph. It was unjustly done, thus to deceive you.

An. 'Twas his insatiate thirst of human blood ;
Which, since I find increasing with his age,
I have thought of the effusion of some,
Which if not satisfying, will delight

Pearchance

Perchance his strange capricious appetite.

Soph. I scarce know what this language signifies;
I hope you think not by some greater sin
To wash away the lesser; Madam,
Your virgin tears will best perform this office.

An. No; my offence is of a deeper stain,
And must be wash'd in blood: I have already
Thought of the way, and fix'd my resolution.

In this disguis'd habit I'll tell my Father,
That I the fatal executioner
Have been of his *Aurelia*, on pretence
Valentius had discover'd my designe:

Now straight I know his rage will prompt him to
Kill me with his own hands; so that I shall
Immediately the proper trophy fall
Of the most injur'd *Florus* funeral.

And, if the blood of an usurping Tyrant
Be ever the most grateful sacrifice
To the immortal Gods, as certainly
It is, I hope that mine deriv'd from him
Will prove an acceptable offering.
The man whom I lov'd best, he made me kill.
Her blood whom he loves best, I'll make him spill.

Ye Gods, look down then with propitious eyes
On him the Priest, and me the Sacrifice.

Soph. I am at present in an ill condition
To give, or take advice, having resolv'd
Not to outlive the setting of this Sun.

An. *Sophonia*, it is not fit that you
Perform the penance of another's crime.
Is mine so great? or are the Gods so cruel;
That nor my tears, nor blood can wash away.

Soph. No, you more white will after this offence
Rise and appear, then in your innocence.

An. O my *Sophonia*; must we now depart?

Soph. Yes never more to meet again. *An.* I am not
So sorry to forsake the light, as thee.

Soph. 'Tis long since thou the only light hast been

The Roman Empress.

57

Of these mine eyes. *An.* And thou ev'n of my soul:
Which never felt eclipse, but in thy absence.
Farewel. *soph.* Farewel.

An. Farewel my dear *sophonia* :
Shall I oncè more, and this the last time joyn
These treacherous and perfidious lips to thine ?

Exeunt.

Hostilius.

I wonder I have no intelligence
From my *Aurelia* : my too forward fears.
Would fain perswade me that she has mis carri'd
In my last enterprize : I must confess,
Th' employment was of a strange nature, to
Make her conspire, and act against the person,
Whom above all mankind she lov'd thee most.

To him a Messenger, and Aurelia disguis'd.

Mess. Sir, here's a person from the enemy's Camp
Desires speedy admittance. *Hof.* Let him enter.
Some happy news, I hope now, from my daughter.
Sir, your business. *An.* It is of such importance,
That 'twill require privacie to hear it.

Hof. Leave us alone ; first tell me who you are.

An. My name is *Oppius*, and I am the Son
Of a Captain of the Prætorian Cohorts :
My Message to your Majesty is concerning
Aurelia the Princess. *Hof.* O let me
Embrace thee ; not a messenger from heaven
Could be so welcome. *An.* But I fear my news
Will not be so : In short the horrid plot,
Which you design'd against our General
Has been discover'd ; and *Aurelia*,
Not like a lawful enemy, but like
A Traitor has receiv'd her punishment.

Hof. How ! pray tell me then what is become of her.

An. Sir, I by order of *Valentius*

I

Have

Have been her Executioner; and here
Behold the fatal Instrument; as yet
Remaining stain'd with her most guilty blood.

Hof. Stay, let me see't; take this reward, for thy
So civil message, civilly deliver'd. *Stabs her*

An. Enough; enough *Hoftilius*; I have
What I expected: I am thy *Aurelia*.

Hof. *Aurelia*! ah my *Aurelia*; what has made thee draw
This punishment upon thy self, and me.

An. Sir, I methoughts had left no other way
To wash away your horrid guilt, and mine
In the effusion of the blood of *Florus*.

O thou his noble soul, which hover'st here
About me, though invisible, and canst not
Repair to thy celestial origine
So soon; not being by thy fate, but my
Perfidious treacherie divorced from
Thy lovely body, look down on my complaint;
See how thy injury is vindicated.

Why cannot my soul follow thee? she shall,
And mounted on the wings of love shall flie
To that part of the pure celestial skie,
Where thou shalt—O *Florus, Florus, Florus*—— *dies.*

Hof. Ah how I have at once wounded two breasts,
And in thy death depriv'd my self of life.
That blood of thine is mine; the torments which
Afflict thy body, I feel in my soul. Who waits there.

To him some Attendants.

Though this young Gentleman I have discover'd
My enemy, and as a Spie dispatcht him;
Yet since he was of high Patritian blood,
See that his body privately you burn,
And close the ashes in a marble Urn.

Exeunt.

Val.

The Roman Empress

59

Valentius. Statilius.

Sta. Sir, the Camp is full of the news already ;
Who say their General was sacrific'd
To satisfie some factions of the Court.

Val. Were not all testimonies cleer against him ?

Sta. No Sir, 'tis thought you were uxoriously
Subject to the ill government of women,
Whose practises should ever be suspected.
Their vows, nor oathes ; their frowns, nor pleasant looks ;
Their smiles, nor tears should conclude nothing in us.
Mans heart is seldom known ; a womans never.

Val. O good *Statilius* compassionate
Me, and my years, so far distant from dotage ;
Which otherwise might plead in my behalf.

Sta. It neither can become your Majesty,
Nor my condition longer to delude you
With idle entertainments of false hopes.
You are betray'd ; *Aurelia* is retir'd
Into her Fathers Court ; whom *Fulvia* follow'd.
Servilius has deliver'd up the Bridge
Committed to his custodie ; where he,
And *Carbo* with their legions have past
To fight under the colors of *Hostilius*.

Sir, these the fruits are of the entercourse
Betwixt the Empress, and her beauteous Niece.

Val. How long have I this viper in my bosom,
Never suspected for a poisonous creature.

O the vain hopes of my approaching triumph
In the air vanisht ! O my reputation
Betrayd by those, in whose hands 'twas committed,
As in the safest custodie.

Exeunt.

Sophonia disguis'd.

Soph. So now methinks the stormie weathers past
Of my tempestuous life ; and if a fair

The Roman Empress.

Ev'ning will crown the day, sure I shall set
 Now red and gloriously here in my blood,
 Which with these daring hands I'll now let forth,
 To vindicate my honor and my worth.

To her Valentius, as it were speaking to some in the Tents.

Soph. But see; yonder he comes, the cruel author
 Of all thy miseries; the murderer
 Of thy fair reputation; and thy Son;
 And as he thought of thee. *Valentius,*
 Here thou shalt see in this Paper the motives
 Of thy repentance; the defence of such
 Whom most unjustly thou hast put to death.

*Gives him a
 Paper.*

Rash man in thy suspicion; cruel in
 Thy execution; from this very moment
 Begin to be unhappy: yesterday
 Thou lost thy Son; and now thy Wife, the true
 Empress here fals before thee.

Stabs her self.

Val. Come in, and take this body forth. What strange
 Phantasms are these? which scorn my power; and
 Torment my sight with dismal objects; and
 My soul with these reproaches. O *Statilius.*

To him Statilius.

The friend, and the Companion of thy Prince,
 Thou opportunely com'st to my assistance;
 If there were any: in this memorial,
 By her presented, who is now a Carcase,
 Included is the full malignity
 Of my misfortune. Yesterday, she said,
 I lost my Son, and now my Wife; but how
 Can that be, if the Empress *Palladia*,
 So many years are past, dy'd without issue.

Sta. This is some person, who at the approach,
 And horror of her death, distracted spoke
 She knew not what.

Val.

The Roman Empress.

61

Val. Ah how I fear this was the true *Palladia*.

Sta. How can that be ? that from the dead one should
Arise, is more then a Poétique fiction.

Val. If this were false, I could not be so troubled.

Sta. Sir recollect your former mind, too much
Dejected with a falsifi'd appearance.

Val. Sure 'twas the head divided from her body,
Which by *Macrinus* was expos'd before
These eyes : yet I suspect their faith unless
Where they, as here, shall make me miserable.

Sta. Sir, if you doubt your own, trust mine ; who saw
And had her head within these hands : you know
To me alone you did impart this secret.

Val. 'Tis true ; but why deferre I thus to read
This short memorial, which may pacifie
Perchance these thoughts, and troubles in my mind.

Sta. ————— Securely read it

Val. My hand shakes, and my heart trembles at
The opening of it ; and a suddain horror
Congeals within me all my vital spirits.

What horrid spectacle is this !

My eyes deceive me, when they should preserve
My honor ; not when they should make me happy.

These are *Palladia's* true Characters.

Sta. Sir you'll find the conceptions different.

Valentius reads ;

Val. *Valentius*, Thy inclination to cruelty has made thee guilty of
two strange errors ; the first in the unjust condemnation of *Palladia*,
upon a false suspicion : who yet escap't the execution of thy barba-
rous designe : the last not only in the mistake of the crime, but the
criminal. The true name of *Florus* was *Vespasius*, whose Father
was *Valentius* ; and not *Arsenius*, or *Macrinus*. *Palladia* was his
Mother ; whose loss not being able to sustain (for he was falsely ac-
cus'd) she made choice of a violent death. If thou desir'st in thyself
a fruitless remorse ; *Macrinus* will give thee an account of her in-
violable integrity ; and of other occurrents sufficient to make thee
miserable.

Sta.

The Roman Empress.

Sta. What can a soul believe ? when thus deluded
By senses; which are thought her true informers.

Val. O my suspicions equally fatal to me
When they are just, or false ! O my sad visions
So fear'd and apprehended without profit :
And verified in me with my ruine.

Useless advises of the heavens ; that
They only might reproach me with imprudence.
When I securely thought them vain, or past ;
I found my ignorance exposè of them.

O thou black dismal day ; arising only
To see my honor blasted with thy light,
And confound me in an eternal night.

Sta. Let not your Majestie's misfortunes triumph
In the dejecting your high noble spirit.
Perchance your complaints are not rational.
Why should you credit to your senses give
Only, when they would make you miserable,
Refusing when they satisfy your wishes,

But see here happily *Macrinus* comes ;
To dissipate the clouds, which here involve us.

To them Macrinus.

Val. O thou Protector of mine enemies ;
And Traitor of the honor of my Empress ;
And of my Son ; why hast thou thus abus'd me ?

Mac. Sir, if it is to be compassionate
An error ; I cannot excuse my self.

Val. No Traitor ; all circumstances accuse thee.
Thy very silence speaks aloud against thee ;
Th' accursed silence, which has thus ruin'd me.

If *Florus* was my Son ; or if *Palladia*
Were innocent ; why didst thou not tell me ? Was I
So great a hater of religious truth.

Mac. In Princes with new Wives, and their Attendants
Surrounded ; and with passions prepossess'd,
Truth finds her entrance doubly barricadoed.

This

The Roman Empress.

63

This, rather then to justifie with hazard,
Made me chuse to secure the innocent.

Val. Tell me how can *Palladia* be absolv'd
From her lasciviousness; when I saw my self
Her Lovers Letter, where in amorous language
He promises to temperate those heats,
Which so consum'd him, in his absence from her:
Can any thing appear more evident?

Mac. Not in a form so near resembling truth;
Which I unveil'd will expose to your view.

Calantha a *Pannonian* Lady, Cousin

Of th'Empress; loving a *Roman* Knight;
Call'd *Plancus*, then of her domestique Train;
Procur'd her consent, that in Pages habit
She might repair to Court; and so discover
The ardency of her affection to him.

She changing then her person, and her name

Into *Lucrinus*, writ that Letter, which so
Subscrib'd, th' occasion was of your mistake,

And gelosie. *Sta.* Sir, which was groundd on

Such probabilities; which will exempt you

From being censur'd rash. *Val.* Ah let him proceed

To tell me how he sav'd *Palladia* from

My furious rage. *Mac.* When that you had enjoyn'd me

The private execution of her, in

My village; where *Calantha* waited on her;

And where we all lamented our ill fortunes;

Secure of each ones innocencie; but

Could find no remedie; at last *Calantha*

Having some respite with her tears, comes to me,

Affirming that she had found out the way,

To lead us out of this dark labyrinth:

She bid me only find her in her Closet,

Within two hours; where I should in writing

See her designe; and, as she knew, approve it.

The time arriv'd, I went to see her; whom

Inewly found expired, with a bloody

Dagger

Dagger in her right hand, and in the left
This Paper, which will clear part of the story.

Val. Statilius, read it.

Sta. *Macrinus*, thy only respect of virtue, and innocence, has made thee inform us of thy odious commission, to make a present this night of my Cousin *Palladia's* head to the Emperor: In whose stead I beseech thee to take mine, divided from my body. 'Tis the only, and last request, which I dying, intreat of thee. Our age, complexions, and features, were so alike, that they will remain undistinguished in death. With this happy delusion thou wilt incur no suspicion of neglecting the Emperour's severe Commands. And the life of the Empress will be hereby preserv'd: Together with my reputation, in thus declaring I have not betray'd so incomparable a Princess.

*Calantha, or the Counterfeit
Lucrinus.*

Sta. O memorable act! where shall we find
Roman, or *Grecian* Pens to celebrate
Sufficiently the worth of this brave woman.

Val. How strangely fortune has industrious been
In this my ruine. - What became of *Palladia*?

Mac. Having perform'd what this Letter desir'd,
From her with difficultie I obtain'd
Patience to live, concealed in my Village;
Till she brought forth a Son infortunate
No less in birth, then death, named *Vespasius*;
Who yesterday expir'd (you know the manner)
Under the name of *Florus*. After that
I plac'd her in the family of *Hoftilius*;
Where she was Nurse, and Governess of his
Aurelia; and her great vertues, the
Delight, and admiration of his Court;
Till now impatient for the loss of her
Vespasius, she us'd violence on her self

The

The Roman Empress.

69

Th' unhappy Mother of an unhappy Son.

Sta. These are events t'astonish minds at once
With grief, and wonder ; horror, and amazement.

Val. O ye Gods ! was there so much artifice
Required to make one man miserable ?

With what contrivance you have wrought my ruin !
O my *Palladia* ! equally to me
Infortunate in the suspicion of
Thy loyaltie ; and clearing of thy fame !

Unhappy Son ! discover'd now my Son ;
When I unworthy am to be thy Father !
Ah *Florus* ! now thy innocence is prov'd ;
When I, thy Father, am guiltie of thy murder.

Sta. Great persons, when they're injur'd in their honor,
Pursue th' offence with death ; you thought you were so.

Val. O interrupt us not : thou hast not yet
Related, how thou didst deceive the world,
Making *Vespasius* appear for thy Son ;
Nor by what error, poor *Arsenius* thought
Him his ; which false belief cost him his life.
Ev'ry one sought the glory to be his
Father ; but I the Monster who begot him.

Mac. Some few dayes after this your Son saw light,
Arsenius had a Son nam'd *Florus* ; whom
(When he was banisht the whole *Roman* Empire)
He to my care committed ; but he prov'd
Of small survivance ; which I conceal'd from him,
Making *Vespasius* pass for his Son *Florus* :
Not willing to add to th' affliction of
His exile this new loss. In the mean space
(Whilst *Arsenius* commanded *Persian* Armies)
Vespasius growing up in years, and hopes,
I told him he was Son of this great Gen'ral ;
Though the world thought him mine : which troubled him
To think he should his first relation have
Sir, to your greatest enemy ; and whom,
Hostilius raising tumults in the Empire,

K

Restor'd

Restor'd, and made his General to oppose you.
 What for their benefit I contriv'd, in th' end
 Has prov'd the fatal ruine of them both.

Val. O the convulsions of my distracted soul,
 Desiring, though not yet deserving death.
 O my eyes, giv'n me only for my torment;
 What will ye first lament? the desperation
 Of a Wife; or the murder of a Son;
 Or my lost honor: And I yet alive?
 Am I still call'd a Prince, or Emperor?
 Are these my eyes thought worthy of the light?
 Yes; and perchance 'tis to betray me with
 More fatal errors, then my former were.

Is there no curteous hand will arm it self
 Against me? but with what? with that Ponyard,
 So cruelly stain'd in the bowels of
 My Son: or else that which is infamous,
 And wreaking yet distills with the chaste blood
 Of my so injur'd Empress. Have I left
 No friend, nor enemy? But why demand I *Goes to stab himself.*
 That aid, which I can give my self? *Sta.* Nay; hold Sir,
 You may die with *Statilius*, not without him. *Here they hold*

Mac. Sir, 'tis the greatest of miseries, to think *him.*
 Your heart not capable of enduring greater.

Val. Then let me die, to free me of this torment.

Sta. Sir, a great Prince like you, though life he hate,
 Should stand in opposition to his fate.

Mac. And being as fearless to live, as die;
 He should at once both life and death despise.

Val. From slaves we life take: not the power of dying:
 Must my condition then be worse then theirs?
 For heavens sake let me die, *Statilius.*

Sta. O Sir preserve that life, on which depends
 The happiness of all your Friends, and Subjects.

Val. 'Tis vain to teach him pitie, who has been
 So cruel to his Son, and Wife, and thee,
 The brave *Honorius*, glory of the age.

Mac. Your Majestie shall live, as long as I
Have force t'oppose your death. *Val.* Ah Traitor, hast thou not
Confer'd sufficient miseries upon me,
Unless thou dost prolong them ? Here this dagger
Shall be the instrument of my revenge on thee.

Sta. I cannot hold him : O *Macrinus* flie.

*Here he gets out of their hands, and pursues
Macrinus, who kills himself.*

Mac. No : like a *Roman*, by these hands I'll die.

Val. He has escapt me.

However I will not escape my self.

So ; now I shall die. Oh ;

But not my name, or lasting memorie.

Stabs himself.

Of my rash and inhumane crueltie

Statilius,

Thy Prince bids thee farewell, and goes to know,
Since here is none, if there be rest below.

dyes.

Sta. Valentius, thy brave soul is fled, that soul
Which did not only animate thy body,
But the whole fabrick of the *Roman Empire*,
Which now lyes bury'd in thy Funeral ;
Such is the sequel of so great a fall.

F I N I S.
